

Peres refuses Musa trip to nuclear plant

CAIRO (AFP) — Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres has refused to allow his Egyptian counterpart Amr Musa to visit a nuclear plant in Dimona in southern Israel, a Saudi paper reported here Sunday. A senior official from the Egyptian foreign ministry would not confirm or deny the report to AFP. But he added that "Egypt has always called for the Dimona reactor to be submitted to international inspection and Israel has rejected this demand." According to the Saudi daily Al Sharq Al Awat, Mr. Peres refused the visit on Thursday during talks in Cairo aimed at defusing a row over Israel's nuclear programme. Mr. Musa asked him "for the third time" since the start of the dispute "to visit the Dimona reactor" in the southern desert. When he asked why Mr. Peres was against such a visit, the Israeli minister replied with a laugh: "You'll see there's nothing there." But Mr. Peres agreed in principle to hold talks on submitting Israeli nuclear installations to international inspection two years after concluding peace treaties with all the countries in the region, including Iran, Iraq and Libya, the paper added.

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Egypt suffers 'brain drain'

CAIRO (AFP) — More than 300 nuclear experts have left Egypt in a brain drain that began when President Hosni Mubarak suspended development of the country's nuclear energy programme a decade ago, a paper said Sunday. Mohammad Abdul Rahman Salama, one such expert, told the weekly Rose Al Yousef that the drain of "Egyptian scientists began after a political decision to suspend the development of the nuclear programme in 1986 through fear of a Chernobyl-style nuclear leak." Before Mr. Mubarak's decision, a large nuclear reactor was to be built west of Alexandria on Egypt's Mediterranean coast. Fawzi Hamad, former president of the Egyptian Atomic Energy Commission, said since 1986 nearly 250 academics went to the United States, while dozens of others went to Canada and Austria. Mr. Hamad attributed the exodus to the modest wages paid to experts in Egypt and the limited budget allocated to nuclear development.

Policeman, daughter killed in Algeria

ALGIERS (AFP) — A policeman and his three-year-old daughter were shot dead by an armed gang at Haoulti Moughous, near the coastal town of Bordj Al Kiffan, Algerian security forces said Sunday. Al Hadj Tagrour, 41, and his daughter Souhaila, 2, died when they were attacked by armed men as they sat in a vehicle on Saturday night, the security forces said. It was the first time since the start of Ramadan that the security forces have announced the killing of one of their members. Earlier, newspapers reported that a group of villagers who organised themselves into a self-defence force killed the head of an Islamic extremist group in revenge for the murders of three of their people (see page 12).

Open-air prayers banned in S. Egypt

MINYA (AFP) — Open-air prayers will be banned for Eid Al Fitr holiday in the southern Egyptian stronghold of Islamic militants, police said Sunday. Prayers at public squares across Minya will be banned on Thursday, the end of Ramadan, to stop gatherings of Islamic militants, they said. The Eid Al Fitr prayers usually take place in the open and not just in mosques as happens during most of the year. Barriers were already being set up around public squares. Militants, who have waged a three-year campaign of violence against the secular government, usually stage a show of force during the Eid holiday, especially in southern Egypt.

Bishop urges prayer for bomb trial judges

BEIRUT (AFP) — A senior Lebanese Christian cleric on Sunday urged worshippers to pray for the "enlightenment" of prosecutors investigating a church bombing which killed 11 people one year ago. Maronite Bishop Beshara Al Khuri issued the appeal to hundreds of people, including government officials and Parliament members who packed the Church of Our Lady of Deliverance, northeast of Beirut, which was ripped apart by a bomb on Feb. 27, 1994. "Bringing the judicial system into disrepute is much worse than that massacre itself," Bishop Rai told the congregation. He urged them to pray "for the enlightenment of the judges" so that they could determine who was responsible for carrying out the brutal bombing during Lenten service one year ago killing 11 worshippers and wounding more than 50.

Former Christian warlord Semir Geagea and other members of his disbanded Lebanese Forces (LF) militia are currently on trial for involvement in the church bombing.

Saudi Arabia, Yemen sign border accord

MECCA (Agencies) — Saudi Arabia and Yemen on Sunday signed a declaration of principles mapping out steps to settle a 60-year-old border dispute that has erupted into armed conflict in the past.

The two countries, after more than one month of difficult talks in Saudi Arabia, signed an 11-point declaration setting up negotiating teams to demarcate land and sea boundaries as well as political ties.

Saudi Defence Minister Prince Sultan Ben Abdul Aziz said a new page had opened in their relations which became strained during the 1991 Gulf war when Riyadh accused Sanaa of backing Iraq's invasion of Kuwait.

But Prince Sultan warned the negotiations could take up to a year. "The borders to be marked out stretch more than 2,000 kilometres," he said.

Saudi Arabia's King Fahd and Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh would sign a final accord, he said.

Sunday's declaration was signed by an adviser to King Fahd, Ibrahim Al Ankar, and Yemeni Deputy Prime Minister Abdul Kader Bajammal capping talks which opened in Riyadh on Jan. 23.

Tension on the border spilled over into violence with several armed clashes, the last on Jan. 10 when more than 50 people were killed, according to diplomats.

In the declaration signed in Mecca, the holiest site in

Islam, they agreed to set up within 30 days a committee which will renew the boundary markers from the Red Sea to Jabal Al Thar, northeast of Sanaa.

More talks will be held later to set out ways to demarcate "the rest of the border eastward to Oman, which Yemen had demanded."

The dispute has focused on three provinces bordering northwest Yemen assigned to Saudi control by a treaty in 1934.

Sunday's declaration also stated that the two neighbours are attached to the "legitimate and binding nature" of the treaty, which Sanaa had argued had expired in 1992 although it agreed to use it as a basis for negotiations.

A top-level joint military committee will be set up to monitor the situation on the ground and avoid any conflict in the border areas. Yemen accused Saudi Arabia of massing troops along the border last month.

A ministerial committee will also be created to "promote economic, trade and cultural relations between the two countries." Some 500,000 Yemenis work in Saudi Arabia.

The two sides did not set down any means of arbitration should their negotiations hit an impasse.

Prince Sultan Ben Abdul told a press conference that "arbitration would be the last resort. We want to assure our

(Continued on page 3)

Israeli gunboats appear to scale down fishing blockade

SIDON (Agencies) — Fishermen sailed out to sea early Sunday off this port city and menacing Israeli gunboats disappeared from the horizon, signs that Israel was easing a ban on fishing off Lebanon's southern coast.

However, the blockade remained in force on about 50 kilometres of coastline, from the border town of Naqoura to the oil harbour of Zahran, about 10 kilometres south of Sidon.

Israel imposed a fishing ban off the southernmost port city of Tyre Feb. 8. On Thursday, Israeli gunboats used their machineguns to scare off fishermen and expand the blockade further north to Zahran and Sidon, the provincial capital of South Lebanon.

Lebanon has appealed for U.S. and international help in getting Israel to end the blockade, which has deprived 1,300 families of their livelihood. The United States has urged all sides to exercise restraint.

There has been growing suspicion in Lebanon that Israel seeks by applying pressure on Beirut to segregate Lebanon from Syria in the Middle East peace negotiations with the Jewish state.

There was no word from

South Lebanon Army (SLA) militia against Hizbullah guerrillas.

The Hizbullah attacks particularly increased in the last 10 days as the guerrilla group, which is opposed to peace with Israel, marked anniversaries of the assassination of two of its leaders by Israeli commandos in South Lebanon.

A total of 37 people have been killed and 58 wounded in South Lebanon hostilities this year. The toll includes three Israeli soldiers killed and 15 injured.

Israel's deputy defence minister, Mordechai Gur, said Sunday that the naval blockade was to pressure Beirut to halt guerrilla attacks in the south.

Fishermen questioned in the morning reported no incidents during their venture, which took them to waters north of the city. Fishermen said they avoided sailing south.

Israeli naval units, however, fired warning shots to prevent fishermen who sailed from Sarafand and Adloun, small fishing harbours between Zahran and Tyre, from going out to sea.

The southern fishing blockade came amid escalating ground fighting in South Lebanon that pitted Israeli forces and their allies of the

(Continued on page 7)

U.S. warns it could veto moves to ease Iraq sanctions

KUWAIT CITY (Agencies) — The United States warned here Sunday it could veto any moves for a "premature" lifting of U.N. sanctions imposed on Iraq after its 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Madeleine Albright told a press conference here that a veto would be a last resort as it appeared enough countries would back Washington in the United Nations next month.

Ms. Albright, on a mission to build a "seven-country blocking coalition" against French and Russian moves to ease sanctions, left for the Czech Republic and is also expected in Italy, Argentina and Honduras.

She has also visited London, which along with Washington has spearheaded

a rejection of easing the sanctions until Iraq complies in full with U.N. resolutions on disarmament, returning Kuwaiti prisoners and property.

The envoy arrived here Sunday during the fourth anniversary of Kuwait's liberation following a visit to Oman, which she said had backed the U.S. stand despite its previous calls to ease the embargo.

Ms. Albright said at the airport before her departure she had delivered a personal message from President Bill Clinton to the emir, Sheikh Jaber Al Ahmad Al Sabah.

"The president made clear our determination to ensure that Iraq complies with all its obligations before there can be any action to modify the sanctions regime," she said.

The United Nations will be reviewing the sanctions imposed on Iraq at its regular two-monthly review in mid-March.

The two-hour Albright visit coincided with a quiet, uneventful fourth anniversary of the liberation of Kuwait.

"As an American I am

proud and thrilled to be here in Kuwait today," Ms. Albright told reporters after she met with the emir.

She said that in his message to Sheikh Jaber, Mr. Clinton "made clear our determination to ensure that Iraq complies with all its obligations before there can be a relaxation of sanctions," she said.

"We hope on the basis of what I'm learning on this trip not to have to use the veto, that we will in fact have a seven-country blocking coalition ... but if necessary we will," she said.

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"As an American I am

pleased to have seen that Iraq has refused so far to make use of a United Nations offer to sell up to \$1.6 billion worth of oil to buy foodstuffs and medicine, saying that U.N. monitoring conditions attached to the offer are an infringement of its sovereignty."

The ambassador said the world body was going to be examining ways for this to be more possible because we do not wish to see the people of Iraq suffer. They are not the ones who have caused this."

Under U.N. rules, a motion before the Security Council can be approved only if at least nine of the body's 15 member nations vote for it. Any of the five permanent members can veto a veto.

Baghdad blames the sanctions for diseases, malnutrition and poverty and says it has complied with demands for the destruction of its weapons for mass destruction.

On her ride to and from the emir's palace, Ms. Albright did not see any festi-

Jordan opens customs posts with W. Bank

AMMAN (AFP) — Jordan has set up two customs posts at crossing points with the West Bank to promote trade with the Palestinians, officials said Sunday. The two posts were opened on the King Hussein and Prince Abdullah bridges, both north of the Dead Sea and leading into the West Bank. A third post has also been opened in the southern Dead Sea port of Aqaba, 350 kilometres south of Amman, to develop trade in the free zone there. Jordan and the self-rule Palestinian Authority signed economic accords on Jan. 26 to boost trade. Meanwhile, a Jordanian delegation travelled to the self-rule Gaza Strip on Sunday to prepare to open a representation bureau. The delegation is due to choose a headquarters for the bureau. Once it is opened Jordan will become the third Arab country to be represented in Gaza after Morocco and Egypt. Foreign Minister Adel Karim Kababish is to visit Gaza to attend the official opening at a date yet to be fixed, officials said.

Price: Jordan 150 Fils

Jordan could get privileged status with EU, but internal changes needed to meet challenge

AMMAN (J.T.) — The European Union (EU) has promised to enter an agreement with Jordan in 1995 under which the Kingdom would have the same privileged status with the EU as Morocco, Tunisia and Israel. His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan revealed

people that we are not the supporters of dictators or hegemony and that arbitration is laid down in the Koran."

President Saleh said on Tuesday he was ready to take the border dispute to the International Court of Justice in The Hague.

The two sides chose a symbolic date signing the declaration on the "Night of Destiny," when the Koran was revealed to the Prophet Mohammad in the year 610. Following are the main points of the declaration signed by Yemen and Saudi Arabia.

1. The two parties state their attachment to the legitimate and binding nature of the 1934 Taif accord and its appendices.

2. A joint committee will be set up within 30 days to renew the border boundary markers from the Red Sea as far as Jabal Al Thar (northeast of Sanaa).

3. The Saudi-Yemeni committee set up in January by negotiators from the two countries are to continue their mission to establish measures and define stages for the delimitation of the rest of the border and the means of arbitration in case the conflict continues.

4. Joint committees will be set up to negotiate the delimitation of the maritime borders from the Red Sea in line with international law.

5. The two parties state their attachment to the legitimate and binding nature of the 1934 Taif accord and its appendices.

6. A joint committee will be set up within 30 days to renew the border boundary markers from the Red Sea as far as Jabal Al Thar (northeast of Sanaa).

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would mean a new beginning for Jordan, he said.

The Crown Prince asked whether Jordan was in a position to meet the challenges posed by such an agreement.

He said Jordan would implement a phased liberalisation that would involve changes in legislation and practices to make its economy contribute to the regional economy and become part of the world economy in a 12-year period.

The Crown Prince, addressing a meeting with the Jordanian Federation of Chambers of Commerce, also said that although the citizen was unable to see the immediate dividends of peace, Jordan was getting support.

The Crown Prince said the EU promise was made to him by the president of the EU Executive Commission during a visit he paid to Brussels. The signing of such an agreement

would mean a new beginning for Jordan, he said.

The Crown Prince also reviewed preparations for an economic conference to be held in Amman in October as a follow-up to a similar meeting held in Casablanca, Morocco, on the Middle East and North Africa last year.

Obituaries for peace process are premature, Israel says

TEL AVIV (AFP) — After a week of dire Palestinian warnings that the peace process was moribund, Israel insisted it was very much alive and even making slow progress despite months of delay.

As Yasser Arafat sought to rally his increasingly sceptical troops at a tense meeting of the PLO executive committee in Cairo on Tuesday, just across the city Israeli and Palestinian negotiators struck another small deal.

It was the second mini-accord in a week as the two sides stumble towards an agreement to hold the first Palestinian elections on the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

"The process with the Palestinians is not dead, on the contrary it's alive," government spokesman Uri Dromi told AFP.

"We are still making progress, there are never-ending contacts," he said after an unprecedented series of summits and meetings in the Middle East, Europe and the United States to keep the process on track.

"There are setbacks once in a while, but it's an ongoing process," Mr. Dromi said.

"We have a common goal, to implement the declaration of principles. We differ how to do it and at what pace, but basically we are moving towards an accepted goal."

Israel's refusal to redeploy outside built-up Palestinian areas on the West Bank or even negotiate the redeployment until it considers that security has improved lies at the root of the PLO's anger.

Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin repeats over and over again that Israel will finally implement the second phase of autonomy — redeploy-



Yitzhak Rabin

ment and elections which were scheduled to take place by last July 13.

"There is no other alternative and the government of Israel is determined to continue the peace process," Foreign Minister Shimon Peres vowed Thursday.

Despite the obstacles, there are signs that Israel is readying for a gradual pull-back.

It emerged during the week that border police are already replacing army soldiers in three West Bank towns and will take over in two more soon.

The paramilitary force's commander, Yitzhak Aharonovitz, said police had "successfully" taken over some duties from regular troops in Hebron, Jenin and Nablus, Bethlehem and Tulkarem are next.

With Jericho already under Palestinian self-rule that covers all the main West Bank towns except Ramallah.

Police Minister Moshe Shahal wants to take away

full control of the West Bank from the military as a precursor to the arrival of Palestinian security forces.

"This is a very positive development which goes together with the army's redeployment scheduled by the Oslo autonomy agreements."

said Mr. Shahal's spokesman.

Israel's proposal to devolve municipal and economic power over Jenin to Mr. Arafat's self-rule authority as an interim stage towards redeployment was rejected by Ararat.

He demanded an overall agreement for the West Bank and control over security too.

But the Israel-appointed mayor of Jenin, Abdullah Lahli, admitted that 2,000 members of the Palestinian police are discreetly at work in and around the town.

And the pattern is repeated across the occupied territory.

Israel has turned a blind eye although Palestinian police are restricted to Jericho and Gaza under the autonomy agreement.

The Palestinian National Authority also revealed that the force, limited to 9,000 in the agreement, has swollen to 16,000. It is set to increase by another 2,000.

Israel was not best pleased at being accused by the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) executive committee of a deliberate policy to delay self-rule, nor at a new attempt to internationalise the dispute over Jewish settlements.

But officials found comfort in Mr. Arafat's personal pledge to pursue peace, despite a loss of support among Palestinians, and from indications that his authority is now taking pains to halt violence.

Netanyahu rides high in the polls

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Right-wing opposition leader Benjamin Netanyahu is promising to give Israel's security along with the Palestinian autonomy he once rejected, as he rides a wave of popularity which could sweep him into power in next year's elections.

Although he was firmly against the autonomy accords with the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), which launched self-rule in May in the Gaza Strip and West Bank town of Jericho, the Likud party leader has stopped calling for an end to the agreements.

And despite being a firm defender of the old dogma of the "indivisibility of the country of Israel" from the Mediterranean to the Jordan Valley," he admits today that the Israeli army's return to the Gaza Strip is unthinkable.

He has become a supporter of Palestinian autonomy on the West Bank, but with a twist.

He completely rejects the idea of an army redeployment from Palestinian centres as is supposed to happen under the 1993 declaration of principles.

Mr. Netanyahu has been using his natural gift as an orator to convince Israelis that he can offer them an alternative to the Labour government of Prime Minister Rabin.

His main weapon is the security fears of a country which expected the peace process to result in a fall in violence, but which has witnessed the opposite: the



Benjamin Netanyahu

deaths of 67 Israelis since the launch of autonomy.

It has led to growing discontent reflected in the government's increasing unpopularity in the opinion polls, and an uncertainty of what road to take next.

A survey published Friday by the daily *Yediot Aharonot* revealed that Mr. Netanyahu would win 52 per cent of the vote compared to 38 per cent for Mr. Rabin, if elections were held today.

Now Mr. Netanyahu is cashing in on his image as a fighter of "international terrorism" carefully cultivated since he first entered the political arena 12 years ago.

With a strong military background based on his service in an elite commando unit, and always impeccably dressed, he has managed to inspire growing confidence.

"We have to seize the sword with both hands, tear the blinds from our eyes and chase the terrorists out of their holes," he told a recent meeting in Tel Aviv to a resounding applause.

This kind of shock therapy is finding an increasing audience, and there is no doubt that as a propagandist he makes good use of the talents which saw him appointed deputy information minister in 1991 serving former Prime Minister Shamir.

But his rivals in Likud accuse him of lacking strength while his opponents on the left have challenged him to come up with a peace programme to replace the government's.

Mr. Netanyahu, known by the nickname "Bibi" and

the English-language "Bibi" and

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Jordan prepares for 50% possibility of locust invasion via Saudi Arabia

By Rana Hussein
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — There is 50 per cent possibility that swarms of locusts which have invaded northern parts of Saudi Arabia could cross into the southern regions of Jordan depending on weather conditions and whether or not the Saudi authorities are successful in combating the pest, according to the Ministry of Agriculture.

Last week, the Rome-based U.N. Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) and the FAO Commission for Controlling the Desert Locust in the Middle East informed the ministry that "parts of Tuhamah in Saudi Arabia were invaded

by locusts, and that Jordan might be the next stop," said Mazen Khasawneh, head of the ministry's department in charge of protecting farmlands.

Mr. Khasawneh told the Jordan Times that a plan of action was approved by the ministry Sunday to deal with the potential problem in coordination with the Armed Forces and police.

He said plans include aerial and ground spraying of possible locust targets.

"Saudi Arabia has always been successful in preventing locust invasions on their lands and before they (the locusts) reach our borders," Mr. Khasawneh said adding that Saudi Arabia has excellent capabilities and experience in combating the in-

sect, but Jordan must stay on alert at all times.

He said the plan of action includes dividing the Kingdom into two sections. One, he said, will cover 81 per cent of the Kingdom and stretch from the southeastern desert bordering Saudi Arabia. The other 19 per cent will cover the rest of Jordan, he said.

"We have combatting teams and equipment ready to be sent to the areas we believe could be hit by the locusts," Mr. Khasawneh said adding that the ministry has purchased extra supplies of pesticides in case the available supply falls short.

Also, Mr. Khasawneh said, a central operation room was formed at the

ministry to receive and relay information within the Kingdom and neighbouring states as well.

The locust, a migratory insect of the short-horned grasshopper family, consumes between two to three grams daily of green food.

Each female locust lays up to 400 eggs in three breeding seasons, which usually begins with the sporadic rains in the desert.

Under certain environmental conditions, which also lead to population increases, young locusts develop into a short-winged migratory form, gather in huge swarms, and at maturity take to the air. The swarms can include more than 100 billion insects. When they finally settle,

the resulting agricultural devastation is enormous.

Migrating locusts appear like a cloud that stretches from the ground up to 200 metres high, moving about 500 kilometres a day.

Jordan last witnessed isolated swarms of locusts in the southeastern desert close to the border with Saudi Arabia in 1989. The Kingdom had since acquired essential equipment to combat the vegetation-destroying insect.

During the same period last year, measures were also taken in the Kingdom to stem a possible locust invasion which started south of Jeddah and extended south to Jizan, along the coast of the Red Sea.



Her Majesty Queen Noor Sunday chairs a meeting on the Royal National Children's Hospital project at the Royal Medical Services at the King Hussein Medical Centre (photo by George Crystal)

Queen chairs meeting on children's hospital project

AMMAN (J.T.) — Her Majesty Queen Noor Sunday chaired a meeting on the Royal National Children's Hospital project (RNCH), according to a Royal Court statement. The meeting, which took place at the Royal Medical Services at King Hussein Medical Centre (RMC), focused on plans one section of the RNCH submitted by the China Aeronautical Project and Design Institute, the statement said.

Since the shortage of paediatric hospital beds has now become more acute, and nearly half of Jordan's population are below the age of 16, the statement said, a decision was made at the highest political level to build the proposed hospital as soon as possible.

According to the statement in 1993, the government of China approved a soft loan of \$8 million to Jordan for the cost of designing and constructing a section of the RNCH. The Jordanian government would finance the construction of the RNCH outpatient building.

Queen Noor, said the statement, stressed at the meeting Sunday the need to diversify the sources of funding for the RNCH.

Upon construction, the RNCH will be the first hospital in the Kingdom to meet tertiary, secondary and some local primary health care needs of children in the 0-16 years age group; it will be accessible to all economic strata of Jordan's population, according to the statement.

It will be built at an initial capacity of 131 inpatient beds

and will provide medical-surgical, intensive, ambulatory and emergency care. The RNCH will not only be a centre for paediatric medical services, but also a site for graduate medical education of paediatric medical, surgical, dental and allied scientific disciplines, said the statement.

It will also include a centre for the assessment of child development, the treatment of cerebral palsy and will programme a comprehensive programme of family guidance.

The Institute for Child Health and Development (ICHD), which Queen Noor established in 1985 with the help of the Swedish Save the Children, is the first and only facility in Jordan to monitor and assess child growth and development.

Once the RNCH is constructed, the ICHD will be affiliated to it and will form its community outreach branch, the statement said.

Queen Noor was received by Minister of Health Aref Batayneh and Director of the Royal Medical Services Yousef Qousous.

'Al Hilal Hospital phase I expansion completed'

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Jordanian National Red Crescent Society (JNRCS) Sunday announced that it has completed the first stage of an expansion project at Al Hilal Hospital in the Ashrafieh district of Amman and plans to announce the start of the second phase after Eid Al Fitr next week.

Society President Mohammad Hadid said that thanks to donations totalling about \$2 million from several Red Cross societies, the JNRCS has added 2,000 square metres to the original 1,500-square-metre space.

The first expansion stage

entailed building a third storey on top of the existing building and the construction of a new X-ray unit, an ultrasound unit, an outpatient department, an emergency section and other utilities, complete with medical and other equipment. Dr. Hadid told the Jordan Times.

He said that the third storey now houses three main operation theatres, a secondary room for quick surgeries, an intensive care unit with six beds, and 15 private patient rooms, two wards and dormitories for resident doctors.

Dr. Hadid said the Luxem-

bourg Red Cross initiated the donations for the initial stage of the annex, and its gesture was later copied by the Japanese, German, American and Netherlands Red Cross Societies which contracted and financed the first stage of the building and the equipment.

According to Dr. Hadid, the JNRCS plans to implement the second stage which is expected to cost JD500,000 which has been provided for in a donation last year from a Jordanian benefactor, Kawakab Mango.

He said the second stage entails considerable expansion of the obstetrics and gynaecology section, and the maternity and ward which will house five incubators instead of two.

In addition, Dr. Hadid said, the second phase entails making room for 150 beds instead of 63 at present and will include blood bank, dormitories for women nurses, an administration section and a canteen.

Anwar Haddadin, the technical director of Al Hilal Hospital said many of the hospital's patients are needy people, and they are exempted from paying for their medical treatment. The hospital usually charges the lowest rates as fixed by the health ministry and the Jordanian Medical Association.

Dr. Hadid said the second stage of the expansion project does not cover the hospital alone, but also in JNRCS headquarters and the vocational training centre where at least 400, up from 100, women trainees will be enrolled to typing, dressmaking and embroidery courses free of charge.

He said the society expects the second phase to be completed in six months.

Delays, losses in mail delivery from U.S. not ministry responsibility, says official

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Ministry of Post and Communications Sunday said that it was not responsible for the delay or loss of mail or other postal materials sent from the United States and blamed such inconveniences on the U.S. postal system.

Ministry Secretary General Hashem Qudah said his office recently received complaints from citizens that mail and packages sent to them from the U.S. were either received after significant delay or lost altogether.

Although such delays or losses were not the responsibility of the Jordanian authorities, the ministry's post administration section has

contacted the U.S. postal services informing them of the situation, said Mr. Qudah.

The official added that delays and losses of mail and other postal materials usually are the result of incorrect addressing, despatch through a third party route rather than directly from the United States to "Jordan" or because the material is sent by surface mail.

According to Mr. Qudah, the Jordanian postal administration does not delay any incoming mail, but promptly distributes it to the addressee.

Mr. Qudah's statement, as reported by the Jordan News Agency, Petra, came one day after Al Ra'i Arabic daily published an open letter to Minister of Post and Communications Jamal Saraireh complaining about an endless delay in the arrival of a post-ed item from Salt to Amman.

Ahmad Ghneimat of Salt complained in his letter to the minister that on Feb. 2, 1995 he sent a package to Amman by ordinary mail. He said the package contained photos, some jewellery, a bottle of perfume and other personal items. But he said that to date the package had not arrived. Mr. Ghneimat urged the minister to help him retrieve the package or ensure its safe arrival to its destination.

Panel rules JPA has right to collect 1% of newspaper advertising revenues

AMMAN (J.T.) — A judicial panel chaired by Judge Khaled Sheimat has ruled that the Jordan Press Association (JPA) has the right to collect one per cent of the total advertising revenues earned by the daily newspapers published in the Kingdom whether the advertisements are placed by government agencies or private institutions and individuals.

The panel said in a statement Sunday that it convened at the request of the prime minister who had asked that the panel examine then issue its ruling in clarification of Article I of the 1983 JPA law and JPA Statute 33 of 1983. The panel was asked to

rule on whether the JPA was entitled to one per cent of the earnings on all advertisements. The ruling confirmed that right and said that in any case the amount should not be less than JD2000 annually from each daily newspaper.

The panel also ruled that each weekly publication should pay the JPA JD75.

Mr. Suleiman Qudah told the Jordan Times Sunday that the association would wait for a reaction from the newspapers' management and would take no action at present in order to observe that the law is being enforced.

"We have been demanding

that they abide by the law and the JPA statute of 1983 for more than 20 years," said Mr. Qudah, who added that in light of the interpretation of the law, there should be no more delays in its implementation.

The panel's ruling, he added, has now put an end to a dispute between the JPA and the newspaper management over the interpretation of the law, and "we now hope that they would respond favourably."

Mr. Qudah said that the additional income would certainly contribute towards improving the association's financial status and achieve the journalist's aspirations.

frontier, leaving around 1,600 kilometres, poorly defined.

That part had been roughly marked by the British before they withdrew from Aden, in what became South Yemen, in November 1967. The Saudis had never formally acknowledged that line.

Much of this part of the border runs through the southern edge of the Rub' Al Khali, or the empty quarter, a vast desert wilderness.

This had little real importance until the mid-1980s, when Yemen discovered oil in areas near the notional boundary line. The recent flare-up centered on that part of the border.

Conservative, tribal North Yemen merged with the socialist South Yemen in May 1990.

Abdul Meguid arrives

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Arab League Council would also discuss a possible collective Arab stand on Egypt's dispute with Israel over the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).

Egypt says that it would not renew its commitment to the treaty when it comes up for review in April unless

Israel enters the agreement, Israel, arguing that it has "special security concerns," has ruled out entering the treaty.

Reports from Cairo said this week that some progress was made in bridging the Egyptian-Israeli differences over the NPT.



PRESENTING CREDENTIALS: Foreign Kwang Rae. The credentials were presented at the Royal National Children's Hospital project at the Royal Medical Services at King Hussein Medical Centre (photo by George Crystal)

WHAT'S GOING ON

The following listings are compiled from monthly bulletins and the daily Arabic press. Readers are advised to verify the listed time and place with the concerned institutions.

FILM

* Film entitled "Ascenseur Pour L'Echafaud" at the French Cultural Centre at 7:00 p.m.

PLAYS

* Play (in Arabic) entitled "You Are Not Yourself" at the Royal Cultural Centre at 9:00 p.m.

* Play (in Arabic) entitled "The Mask" at the Royal Cultural Centre at 8:00 p.m.

YOUTH FESTIVAL

* Youth festival (with the participation of

EXHIBITIONS

* Display of Bani Hamida new designs of rings at the Bani Hamida House, Jabal Amman (Tel. 658696).

* Exhibition of oil paintings by Sabah Ibrahim at Al Bayraq Art Gallery, Sports City intersection (Tel. 658701).

* Exhibition of handicrafts by Hasmig Kuyumjian at the Royal Cultural Centre.

* Photo exhibition at the Friends of Archaeology Centre.

* "Young America" exhibit (with photographs featuring Americans of all ages) at the American Centre.

* Exhibition of works by Qasim Al Samir at the Housing Bank Complex Gallery.

* Book exhibition at the Royal Cultural Centre.

Mass graves in Grozny

(Continued from page 12)

ers loyal to Chechen rebel leader Dzhokhar Dudayev.

Although Urs-Martan has kept largely neutral, Chechen refugees said they did not believe the Russian assurances.

It was hard to see how Russian forces will be able to tell friend from foe in the patchwork of divided loyalties across southern Chechnya.

Armed irregulars on both

sides wear identical combat gear and carry the same weapons, except for the occasional pro-Dudayev fighter who has a green headband of gazavat, or martyrdom.

The clashes came while Russian officials and Chechen religious leaders in Nazran, capital of neighbouring Ingushetia, tried unsuccessfully to negotiate a ceasefire. The talks reportedly were to continue Sunday.

Armed irregulars on both



Balladur is on slippery slope

PARIS (Agencies) — France's conservative Prime Minister Edouard Balladur, once the miles-ahead favourite to win presidential elections next spring, on Sunday appeared on a slippery slope to possible defeat as scandals combined with poor poll ratings to damage his campaign.

With the first round of the elections less than two months away on April 23, Mr. Balladur no longer dominates the opinion polls, with rival Gaullist candidate Jacques Chirac and Socialist Lionel Jospin hot on his heels.

One poll by the IPSOS institute credited the three with absolutely equal scores in the first round, prompting the right-wing weekly *Le Point* to comment that Balladur was on "a slippery slope."

At the same time Interior Minister Charles Pasqua, once a trump card in the Balladur campaign, turned into a liability after provoking two scarcely credible scandals that dragged down the prime minister.

Mr. Pasqua was widely blamed for an embarrassing wire-tapping scandal and a row over leaked allegations of U.S. spying in France that followed hard on its heels last week, raising doubts he will be able to realise his ambition of becoming prime minister

should Mr. Balladur win the

race to replace Socialist President François Mitterrand.

The espionage affair was interpreted both in France and in the United States as a blatant attempt to divert attention from the phone-tapping case that involved illegal financing of the country's biggest party, Mr. Pasqua's own neo-Gaullist Rally for the Republic (RPR), and in his own backyard, his Hauts-de-Seine power base, west of Paris.

But the two affairs prompted a run on the French franc which last Friday sank to its lowest level since October 1993, breaking briefly through the 3.53-franc level against the German mark, dangerously close to its all-time low of 3.5490 to the mark in August 1993.

The wiretap case showed that the Balladur campaign is at the mercy of the repercussions of corruption scandals gripping the country in which three of his ministers have already had to resign.

The prime minister must now decide whether to ask for Mr. Pasqua's head, but analysts said another resignation would be one too many and would also lose Balladur the support commanded by Mr. Pasqua within the RPR.

Pollsters said Sunday that the wiretap case remained the main cause of Mr. Balladur's decline in popularity. Philippe Mechet, director-general of the Louis Harris

Institute, said the bugging case was the "first factor in the decline" of the prime minister, coupled with his reputation for personal integrity and simplicity, exemplified by his election slogan "With Jospin, it's clear."

But they said the situation could easily be transformed, with all the polls showing that around 50 per cent of electors have not yet made up their mind.

Meanwhile the Socialists can't even count on President François Mitterrand rallying his own family behind the party's presidential candidate. His high-profile nephew is backing conservative Jacques Chirac.

"Solidarity isn't a factor any more," television host Frédéric Mitterrand said in an interview published Saturday in *Le Parisien*. "François Mitterrand is arriving at the end of his second term. I have my freedom to manoeuvre again."

"At the moment, I think the candidate I prefer is Jacques Chirac. For lots of precise reasons, namely because he helped me with important cultural initiatives," he said.

Frédéric Mitterrand, long considered a leftist intellectual, has hosted talk shows and other programmes and directed a film.

President Mitterrand, known to favour party chief Henri Emmanuel, has yet to give candidate Lionel Jospin his backing.

Colombia faces possible drug blacklisting

BOGOTA (R) — Speculation about possible links between President Ernesto Samper's government and drug traffickers has forced Colombia on the defensive days before a crucial decision in Washington on future anti-drug aid.

Under an annual procedure, President Bill Clinton must by March 1 tell Congress whether he believes Colombia, which has seen dozens of journalists, judges, politicians and police killed in the war on drug cartels, is doing all it can to crush traffickers and cut the supply of narcotics to U.S. streets.

Colombia has for the last eight years won full "certification" as the recommendation is known, but this year things are less certain.

"The bottom line is that the Americans just don't trust Samper," one senior government official said on condition of anonymity. "The main reason why (he is not trusted) is the narco-cassettes."

Mr. Samper's election victory last June was overshadowed when his defeated rival, Andres Pastrana, produced what everyone here calls the "narco-cassettes" — a series of taped phone conversations in which leaders of the Cali cocaine cartel were heard to discuss a \$3.6 million donation to Mr. Samper's campaign.

Mr. Samper said the cartel kingpins, who control around 80 per cent of the world's cocaine supply, had offered money for his campaign but he insisted it was rejected. An internal party audit supported him and the prosecutor-general at the time, Gustavo De Greiff, found no evidence of wrong-doing.

Mr. Samper's chief spokesman, Juan Fernando Cristo, dismisses the latest drug rumours as the work of malicious anti-government elements and says Washington has no reason not to trust the president fully.

"All there is, is a series of weak arguments and episodes which are being used to try to justify such a decision," he said, referring to a possible decertification.

Mr. Samper himself, eager to show commitment in the war on drugs, pledged Feb. 7 to wipe out every single coca bush, marijuana plant and opium poppy in the country in the next two years to choke off drug supply — the government's most ambitious eradication programme ever.

But despite his administration's denials and its pledges to go on fighting the drug cartels the shadow of the "narco-cassettes" continues to haunt Mr. Samper.

U.S. Ambassador to Colombia Myles Frechette said in a speech in New York last month that it would be "difficult" for Colombia to win certification given the atmosphere in Washington.



Japanese Crown Prince Naruhito (left-middle) and Crown Princess Masako (right-middle) chat with an earthquake survivor inside a school gymnasium where about 900 local residents are taking shelter after losing their homes, in Kobe (AFP photo)

Naruhito, Masako visit quake victims in Kobe

KOBE, Japan (AP) — Japan's Crown Prince Naruhito and Princess Masako laid flowers on altars for the dead and consoled homeless people Sunday in a visit to earthquake-devastated areas of western Japan.

Prince Naruhito, eldest son of Emperor Akihito and heir to the throne, and his wife joined 5,900 bereaved relatives and other citizens in praying for earthquake victims in memorial services in the Kobe suburbs of Nishinomiya and Ashiya.

They laid white carnations on the altars at both, but made no speeches.

Of 5,438 people killed by the 7.2 magnitude quake on

Jan. 17, 995 people died in Nishinomiya and 378 in Ashiya, the National Police Agency said.

Earlier Sunday, the royal couple visited a construction site and elementary school that shelters 860 left homeless by the quake.

"Please take care of your health," the prince told one woman at the school. Several victims in the school gymnasium cried after talking with Prince Naruhito.

As of Sunday, officials said 188,000 homeless people were staying at 911 shelters in schools and public facilities.

They said 415,100 households had no gas supplies and 92,700 had no running water.

Simpson lawyers coach key witness on testimony

LOS ANGELES (R) — O.J. Simpson's defence lawyers were spending Sunday coaching one of their star witnesses whose testimony could prove to be a minefield of contradictions and inconsistencies.

Rosa Lopez, whose reluctance to testify has already given the lawyers giant headaches, was due to take the witness stand Monday to provide an alibi for the American sports legend in his double murder trial.

But Ms. Lopez, who has already been branded a liar by the prosecution scenario, at about 10:15 (local time).

But Ms. Lopez, a live-in housekeeper at the home next door to Simpson's, was due to testify that she saw the Bronco parked outside the football Hall of Famer's estate at between 10:15 p.m. and 10:20 p.m. that night.

Ms. Lopez contradicted herself several times during a hearing Friday to determine if her testimony should be taken immediately because she was unlikely to return to Los Angeles.

not guilty in the murders of his ex-wife, Nicole Brown Simpson, and her friend Ronald Goldman.

The two were stabbed and slashed to death outside Nicole Simpson's luxury townhouse in the fashionable Brentwood section of Los Angeles on June 12, 1994.

Prosecutors claim Simpson drove there in his white Ford Bronco from his estate two miles away, committed the murders and then drove back.

The two were murdered, according to the prosecution scenario, at about 10:15 (local time).

But Ms. Lopez, a live-in housekeeper at the home next door to Simpson's, was due to testify that she saw the Bronco parked outside the football Hall of Famer's estate at between 10:15 p.m. and 10:20 p.m. that night.

Ms. Lopez contradicted herself several times during a hearing Friday to determine if her testimony should be taken immediately because she was unlikely to return to Los Angeles.

Kim Jong-II pays last respects to defence minister

SEOUL (AFP) — North Korea's reclusive leader Kim Jong-II has made a rare appearance to pay his last respects to his staunch backer and protector, Marshall O Jin-U, official reports said Sunday.

Mr. Kim visited a government building where the body of the 78-year-old defence minister has been lying in state since his death Saturday from cancer, the official Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) said.

"Comrade Kim Jong-II observed a moment's silence in memory of the deceased and made a round of the bier in bitter grief at the loss of his close revolutionary comrade-in-arms," the KCNA said.

Mr. Kim, 53, was accompanied by military leaders, including chief of staff Vice Marshall Choe Kwang, 77, the man most likely to take over as head of the military.

Mr. Kim heads a 240-strong state funeral committee for Marshal O, who died in a Pyongyang hospital early Saturday, the report said.

The demise of Marshall O, who went to Paris for cancer treatment last year, came as the Stalinist state was still reeling from the death of state founder Kim Il-Sung last July.

As the leader of the "old guard," Marshall O had fiercely protected Kim Jong-II's succession to power, soliciting loyalty from the North's 1.1 million-strong armed forces.

Mr. Kim's death leaves

Kim Jong-II as the only surviving member of the three-man political bureau presidium, a top decision-making body of the North's ruling Workers' Party, commentators said.

"Only 50 people have

turned up to vote this morning," said the director of one polling booth where 2,000 people were to have cast their ballots.

Paradoxically, the highest participation rates were in regions controlled by the banned opposition.

In the Cam Valley, some 150 kilometres (93 miles) from Dushanbe and controlled by the armed Islamic opposition, turnout was already at 89 per cent by midday.

In the mountainous region of Pamir in the autonomous Gorno-Badakhshan covering about half the country's surface area, the Foreign Ministry put participation at 63 per cent by midday, though it was impossible to verify the figures independently.

The region is usually seen as an opposition stronghold.

There were earlier fears the banned Islamic opposition would try to disrupt polling after a rocket attack here Thursday on a bus carrying doctors and nurses of Russian Border-Guards killed one person and wounded six.

Sunday's poll took place in the absence of international observers, who refused to monitor the proceedings, citing a basic lack of democracy and the absence of virtually any opposition candidates in the Central Asian nation.

"There is not a basic level of democracy," said Gancho Ganchev, head of the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe mission in Dushanbe.

TAJIKISTS vote in take it or leave it poll

DUSHANBE (AFP) — Tajikistan went to the polls Sunday faced with a stark choice of voting for a supporter of neo-Communist President Emomali Rahmonov or

SLORC troops last month stormed the KNU's headquarters on the Moci River, sending some 10,000 Karen fleeing across the natural border into Thailand.

Since then, Rangoon soldiers and Karen defectors have crossed the river several times, apparently to kidnap KNU officials and lure refugees away from the KNU leadership and back to Burma.

Artificial insemination without sperm

ATHENS (AFP) — Two

Greek women have become

pregnant after being arti-

factically inseminated by a new

technique, developed by

Greek and Japanese re-

searchers, that does not use

sperm, Greek newspapers re-

ported Saturday.

Greek gynaecologist Nikos Sofikitis,

who devised the method with

a team of specialists working

at Tottori University in west-

ern Japan, said he removed

cells from the testicles of

infertile men and, after a

special preparation in the

laboratory, injected them

into the women. Out of 80

couples of various nationalities who asked Dr. Sofikitis,

34, to help them have chil-

dren, 46 women became pre-

gnant, but only four managed

to keep the embryo for more

than two weeks. Two of those

women later had miscarri-

ages, the doctor said,

adding that the technique "is

still in its infancy."

He said the first birth was due in

May.

60 couples tie the-knot in mass ceremony

TAIPEI (AFP) — Sixty cou-

ples, including a Japanese

bridegroom, were married

Sunday in Taiwan's first-ever

mass ceremony conducted

according to a centuries-old

custom. Brides and grooms,

clad in bright red costumes as

in ancient times, exchanged

vows at the Confucius Temple, with Vice Mayor Pai

Fish-Rising officiating. The

wedding was conducted

according to a centuries-old

Chinese custom, with the

grooms leading the way

astride horses and the brides

riding behind in palanquins,

or wooden sedan chairs. The

city government gave each

couple a wedding certificate

and an electric blanket drier



Peruvian President Alberto Fujimori speaks with a soldier wounded in the border conflict with Ecuador during a visit to Tumbes in the conflict zone. Mr. Fujimori accused

Fujimori charges Ecuador of launching attacks

UTCUBAMBA, Peru (AFP) — President Alberto Fujimori accused Ecuador Saturday of launching "criminal" attacks to retake an area in a month-old border dispute as Peru dispatched more troops to the region.

With a week-old ceasefire shaken by sporadic fighting, Mr. Fujimori denounced what he claimed was an Ecuadorian attempt to recover the disputed village of Tumbes in the Condor Mountains.

Mr. Fujimori, visiting troops in the El Milagro outpost, said Ecuador had begun Friday "fierce bombing, I would call it criminal, with the aim of recovering

Tumbes."

"I felt it, I lived these attacks, but I have also seen our troops defend our positions," said the Peruvian leader, who according to witnesses narrowly missed a mortar attack earlier this week.

Ecuador's Information Minister Enrique Proano meanwhile announced in Quito that military and diplomatic observers from Argentina, Chile, Brazil and the United States planned to travel to the war-torn region Sunday or Monday.

The monitors were to report on compliance with a Feb. 17 ceasefire agreement

Ecuador of launching attacks to try to retake an area in the month-old border dispute as Peru dispatched more troops to the region. (AFP photo)

that was to end the fighting between Ecuador and Peru over the unmarked stretch of border.

Argentina, Chile, Brazil and the United States are the guarantors of the 1942 Rio Protocol that set the borders between the two countries.

Peruvian military sources indicated meanwhile that 500 troops had been shifted from a base in Junin where they had been fighting leftist rebels to the El Milagro base near the Condor Mountains.

"All the bases and guard posts as well as supply depots in the conflict zone are, as of this morning, securely stocked with artillery to repel a possible Ecuadorian air attack," a

Peruvian military spokesman said.

The Guarantor countries consider that their immediate presence in the area would contribute to the complete implementation of the Itamaraty Peace Agreement," they said in a statement, referring to the ceasefire signed earlier this month in Brazil.

The commander of Ecuador's Condor 21 Brigade, Colonel Jose Grijalba, said there had been lull in the fighting over the past two days and suggested Peru was mounting another offensive.

In Brazil, the four Rio guarantors called on the two Andean nations "to avoid any initiative that could be interpreted as a threat or provocation."

Ecuadorian military officials reported late Saturday a cessation of hostilities along the border.

In Quito, Ecuador said that the Vatican had agreed to its request for Pope John Paul II to send a personal representative to intervene.

Among the exchanges reported were three mortar rounds fired by Ecuadorian troops near a Peruvian post, including one that landed within 100 metres of Mr. Fujimori, a journalist at the scene said Friday.

Mr. Fujimori was unharmed and was hustled out of the zone. He was being inspected by the border post at Cueva De Los Tayos located in the jungle on a 76-kilometre stretch of unmarked border of the Andes Condor range.



Peruvian President Alberto Fujimori drinks water as a soldier collects more water (left) (AFP photo)

Chechens shun Moscow revenge attacks

MOSCOW (R) — Chechen secessionist rebels have so far failed to strike back at Moscow as they threatened, says a police chief in Russia's heavily-guarded capital.

Not a single vengeful Chechen guerrilla has been caught trying to blow up strategic sites in Moscow since Kremlin troops launched a military campaign in the separatist region in December, according to crime fighters here.

"No so-called terrorists, people who have come specifically to Moscow to blow something up, have been detained here," said Mikhail Suntsev, deputy head of the Ethnic Crimes Unit of the Regional Directorate for the Fight With Organised Crime (RJOF).

"But we can't guarantee this is completely impossible. So we have geared up to prevent these things from happening," he said in a weekend interview.

Armoured cars stand at exits from Moscow's main ring road. Police accompanied by soldiers search trains, metro stations, and airports, detaining Chechens for questioning. Mr. Suntsev did not know how much the security

operation had cost so far. President Boris Yeltsin sought to justify his army's brutal military intervention in Chechnya by repeatedly accusing the rebel region's leader of generating crime and destabilising the whole of southern Russia.

Chechen President Dzhokhar Dudayev, still directing separatist fighters now falling back from Russian-held Grozny, has fuelled fears of Chechen revenge with threats he would spread the war to Moscow by organising terrorist attacks there.

The Chechen mafia, one of several southern ethnic mafias which moved to Moscow as Western-style economic activity was permitted for the first time in the Soviet Union in the late 1980s, has a legendary and fearsome reputation.

Mr. Suntsev said there had been 30,000 Chechens living in Moscow at the start of the war. The figure had probably swelled to about 50,000 by February, as refugees escaped the fighting in their homeland and gravitated towards Moscow.

It comes way down in the pecking order of crime, below Russia mafia groups, the powerful Georgian mafia and the fruit-and-vegetable trade.

ers of Azerbaijan, he told Reuters.

The Chechen mafia's reputation stemmed from the early days when it moved into Moscow, he said, and was still fighting fiercely for territory.

Since then, it had agreed on its sphere of influence — protection rackets and extortion — with other crime groups.

"Basically now Chechens have made their contacts with Russian groups. There isn't much confrontation because they know they're not living here just for a month or two. They've found common ground and divided the crime business among themselves."

"Chechen criminal activity has dropped sharply."

Mr. Suntsev said there had been 30,000 Chechens living in Moscow at the start of the war. The figure had probably swelled to about 50,000 by February, as refugees escaped the fighting in their homeland and gravitated towards Moscow.

About 2,000 of them belonged to criminal groups at one of the four levels. Chechen crime groups operate on, he added, from small-

scale theft by young students or workers through organised crime "fighters" and bosses, to political opponents of Mr. Dudayev.

"It was in the late 1980s and early 1990s, when they started operating here and were pretty active, that people here started to be scared of them. So the word Chechen has acquired a negative connotation, although they aren't so active any more."

Mr. Suntsev said envoys of Mr. Dudayev had visited Moscow to try to stir up the Chechen diaspora into committing extremist acts. But the leaders of the diaspora, mostly from the opposition to Mr. Dudayev, had ordered other Chechens to behave.

"It was the criminal part of the diaspora which spoke out most strongly against any extremist activity. This is because they're already settled here and they have their own sources of finance," he said.

"Of course if they did commit some terrorist act the forces of law and order would catch up with them. They understand that full well, so they have opted not to try anything."

Kozyrev to assess future with China after Deng

MOSCOW (R) — Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev is likely to use his visit to Beijing this week to discreetly assess the future of Russia's relations with China as its paramount leader Deng Xiaoping declines.

Official announcements of the visit, due to take place on March 1 and 2, said Mr. Kozyrev's chief aim was to maintain political contacts with Chinese leaders.

Deputy Foreign Minister Alexander Panov has said neither this visit nor one to Japan immediately afterwards on March 2-4 will produce any sensations.

But Russian Television quoted unnamed Foreign Ministry officials as saying last week that Moscow was keen to know who is to succeed Mr. Deng, one of the

architects of the Russian-Chinese thaw which replaced decades of hostility and suspicion.

"Senior diplomats have stressed the importance of Russo-Chinese relations for Moscow and the need to find ways to preserve the current positive trends in them whatever changes may occur in China," a television commentator said.

Mr. Deng and the former Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev reached a breakthrough in the 1980s, ending a fierce ideological stand-off and easing huge tensions in the region.

Post-Communist Russia has found in China a huge market for its industries, including arms producers, which have been hard hit by an economic slump at home.

China had long claimed back three tiny strips of land on the 4,300-kilometre eastern section of the border seized by the Soviet Union in the mid-1930s. The border treaty marked the disputed territory as Chinese and actual demarcation started in 1993.

Mr. Nazdratenko has said his administration will formally ask the Russian parliament to denounce the treaty, ratified in 1991.

Earlier this month Yevgeny Nazdratenko, governor of the maritime region bordering China, said the treaty, which surrenders to Beijing some 15 square kilometres of the territory now controlled by Moscow was unjust and should be ratified.

But some political parties inside and outside the parliament may try to use the treaty issue to stir up nationalist feeling.

Demirel's trip to Sarajevo is uncertain

Curb on peacekeepers puts Bosnian army, U.N. at odds

SARAJEVO (R) — The Muslim-led government is taking a tougher stance towards the United Nations mission in Bosnia, restricting movements of peacekeepers in a bid to assert its authority, U.N. officers said Sunday.

"They are certainly much bolder than they were before," said U.N. spokesman Lieutenant-Colonel Gary Coward. "They apparently wish to change their relationship with the U.N."

The government army has imposed restrictions on peacekeeping troops across the country, preventing U.N. patrols near frontlines in northeast Bosnia and insisting on inspections of U.N. vehicles.

Bosnian Muslims blockaded British peacekeepers at their base in central Bosnia for a third day running Sunday in a row over the presence of Serb liaison officers who arrived there last month under the current ceasefire accord.

Bosnian army soldiers were also blocking a road outside Visoko, where Canadian peacekeepers have been faced with increasing harassment from the Muslims.

The government army has never allowed peacekeepers to set up bases on their territory and U.N. officials said the Muslims were now reluctant to allow peacekeepers to get a look at their preparations.

In Brasilia earlier, the four Rio guarantors called on the two Andean nations "to avoid any initiative that could be interpreted as a threat or provocation."

Ecuadorian military officials reported late Saturday a cessation of hostilities along the border.

In Quito, Ecuador said that the Vatican had agreed to its request for Pope John Paul II to send a personal representative to intervene.

Among the exchanges reported were three mortar rounds fired by Ecuadorian troops near a Peruvian post, including one that landed within 100 metres of Mr. Fujimori, a journalist at the scene said Friday.

Mr. Fujimori was unharmed and was hustled out of the zone. He was being inspected by the border post at Cueva De Los Tayos located in the jungle on a 76-kilometre stretch of unmarked border of the Andes Condor range.

coverage of United Nations in the local media and calls by a government representative to renegotiate the financial terms of the U.N. mission in Bosnia, which at present only pays for utilities and not for its accommodation.

Until recently, it was always Bosnian Serb forces that blamed the United Nations for harassing peacekeepers.

Blockading U.N. soldiers or media criticism would have been unheard of earlier in the war but the government now apparently believed it was time to show the U.N. who was in charge.

United Nations officials and Western diplomats say the stricter attitude reflects the government's growing confidence in its army and a wish to exert more authority over its own territory, especially outside Sarajevo.

With the four-month ceasefire set to expire on May 1, the Serbs and the Bosnian army have been using the truce to regroup and ready for an expected resumption of fighting.

The Bosnian Serbs have never allowed peacekeepers to set up bases on their territory and U.N. officials said the Muslims were now reluctant to allow peacekeepers to get a look at their preparations.

"They watched the Bosnian Serb side flex their muscles to some extent and the U.N. is limited in how it can respond. So they may be

following a similar line," said Col. Coward.

A Western diplomat added: "They are asserting their sovereignty towards an international organisation, which is their right. But they have to be careful. They need the U.N. in Sarajevo."

The Bosnian government still relies on the U.N. mission to ferry in vital relief supplies, especially in Sarajevo, where a humanitarian air bridge has kept the city alive despite nearly three years of Serb siege.

"They have to walk a delicate line," the diplomat said.

The real test of relations between the Muslim-led government and the U.N. could come in the spring, when fighting may resume in earnest after the ceasefire expires.

Meanwhile, Turkish President Suleyman Demirel had informed Ankara of the security situation around Sarajevo but had made no request to cancel the visit.

The U.N. could not say who had fired at the advance party's aircraft Saturday by a planned trip but Mr. Demirel was sure to provoke opposition from Bosnian Serbs besieging Sarajevo.

They view Turkey, which

ruled the region for centuries under the Ottoman Empire, as a traditional enemy. Ankara is a strong supporter of Bosnia's Muslim-led government.

The plane carrying a team of Turkish government officials preparing the visit came under small-arms fire during a landing at Sarajevo Airport. There were no casualties and it appeared the aircraft sustained no serious damage.

One U.N. source said he thought the Serbs were "trying to send a message."

Mr. Demirel's planned trip is his second attempt in eight months to visit Sarajevo. He had to cancel a trip in July at the last moment because Bosnian Serb forces refused to guarantee safe passage.

Pope John Paul also had to cancel a visit in September because the Serbs refused to assure his safety.

Sinn Fein ponders response to Anglo-Irish peace initiative

DUBLIN (AFP) — After extending an historic olive branch to Ulster Unionists, the Sinn Fein political wing of the Irish Republican Army (IRA) Sunday set about formulating a response to the four-day-old Anglo-Irish peace initiative.

Earlier this month, a

Uster loose against the will of the people, for many Unionists it appeared to confirm their worst fears: That the British government was prepared to partition authority over the province with the Republic of Ireland.

London and Dublin have stressed that the joint proposal was not a "blueprint" for a settlement, but a talking point aimed primarily at getting all parties in the 25-year sectarian dispute around the same negotiating table.

British civil servants have been holding talks with both Sinn Fein and Protestant loyalist groups for some two months, but Sinn Fein has complained that those so-called "exploratory talks" have been dragging and should move forward to ministerial level meetings.

The IRA struggle for a united Ireland had not ended, Mr. Adams said, only entered a new, non-violent phase.

On Sunday, delegates were

to hear pleas for the release or transfer to Ulster of 40 Republican "political prisoners" currently held in British prisons.

And they were to debate how to react to last Wednesday's joint framework document in which British and Ireland dropped their constitutional claims to Northern Ireland and agreed to allow the province's 1.6 million inhabitants to decide their own destiny.

Unionists rejected the joint document out of hand as a "sell-out," a "nationalist agenda" and their "eviction cutting."

Witnesses said young Shi'ites, faces covered in black cloth, fired into the air with Kalashnikov rifles in the alleys of the populous central and southern districts of Karachi.

The militants roamed around the cars and on motorcycles, shouting "revenge" and "blood for blood," the witnesses said.

Morning traffic was thin in Karachi's normally busy streets, with many people apparently staying home for fear of violence. By midday, the bustling city was deserted and public transport thinned.

Police said four people were found killed Sunday in different localities, but there was no information if the deaths were related to Saturday's violence. Two of them were shot, one was strangled and the fourth beaten to death.

The sources, quoted in the Johannesburg Sunday Times, said Mr. Mandella has already taken his decision but no announcement has been made because he wishes to personally tell her of his decision upon her return.

Mrs. Mandella defied an order Thursday by the president to cancel her official visit to Ghana, Burkina Faso and Ivory Coast, saying through her private secretary that the order came after her plane had already taken off.

A senior government source told AFP the president was "hopping mad" over the incident.

Mrs. Mandella, deputy minister of arts, culture, science and technology, also said the visit, principally to attend the PanAfrican Film and Television Festival in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, could not be cancelled at the last minute as it would damage South Africa's standing in West Africa.

Night gunfire kept tension high in Karachi Sunday and hundreds of armed police guarded mosques.

Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto sent a message to the families of those killed in Saturday's mosque attacks and urged the provincial government to find and punish the culprits.

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Tension can't help

MARATHON TALKS in Cairo between Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak and Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres failed to nudge Israel closer to reality in its posture on nuclear weapons in the Middle East. The Cairo negotiations aimed to break the deadlock between the two states over the future of the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), but Israel refused to commit itself to joining the accord in return for Egypt's renewal of its membership during the upcoming review conference in New York in April. The furthest that Mr. Peres would go to meet Egypt's demand for a quid pro quo agreement is to signal some kind of "intent" to "consider" signing and ratifying the NPT at an "unspecified" time, rumoured to be two years or so, after the conclusion of comprehensive peace in the region that would span not only the Arab countries but also Iran and possibly Pakistan as well.

Because President Mubarak did not take the Israeli bait and insisted on a definitive pledge with the time factor spelled out in the clearest possible way, it was evident perhaps that the tension between the two countries would become even more serious. While we do not expect the dispute to get out of hand over this particular issue, strategists might worry that any breakdown in Egyptian-Israeli talks on the nuclear issue could only dampen hopes and have negative implications on other Arab fronts with Israel. Egypt does not stand alone in its bid to rid the area from all mass destruction bombs. The making of the Middle East a nuclear, biological and chemical free zone has been the hallmark of Arab policy ever since the introduction of these awesome arsenals to the international scene in general and the Middle East in particular.

There is a conviction across the board in the Arab World that unless Israel's nuclear ambitions are checked sooner or later other Arab or Islamic countries would opt to end the Israeli monopoly. Better than giving loose promises, Israel should entertain a regional scheme for security and cooperation that can be backed up and guaranteed by the permanent members of the U.N. Security Council. Otherwise, the concerned Arab capitals should also adopt a "wait and see" policy on the NPT till Israel's sight on its extension becomes clearer and more reassuring.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

COMMENTING on efforts by Egypt, Jordan and the Palestinian leadership to ensure the repatriation of the Palestinian refugees and displaced persons, a writer in *Al Ra'* said that Jordan has all the right to insist on the refugees' return to their homeland since the Kingdom was the party that bore the brunt of the burden of the wars with Israel in the past five decades. Tawfiq Abu Rub said that Jordan has given refuge to the displaced persons and has been providing them with all possible assistance. It is the duty of the international community to see to it that the Kingdom is relieved of this heavy burden and to force the Israelis to accept the repatriation of Palestinians in implementation of U.N. resolutions, he stressed. The writer said that the Palestinian leadership should cling hard to its demand for the repatriation of the displaced people who have suffered for so long. Noting that Egypt was joining hands with the Palestinians and Jordanians to seek the return of the displaced people, the writer said that joint efforts and collective stand in this concern was bound to bring pressure to bear on Israel and the world community to see to it that justice is restored and the rights of the displaced people are respected.

A WRITER in *Al Dastour* criticised the U.S. administration for what he said is its double standards in dealing with Islamic fundamentalism. Saleh Qallab said that while the United States openly declares war on the Islamists of the Arab World and openly declares its desire to bring down the regimes of Sudan and Iran, we find it at the same time holding contacts with these regimes and with the Islamists in Algeria and Egypt. The writer drew attention to the fact that Washington was continually condemning Hamas but is opening dialogue with the movement's leader, Mousa Abu Marzouq. He said that instead of lifting the embargo on Iraq, which is opposed to Iran and Islamic fundamentalism, Washington is trying to promote diplomatic ties with Tehran and further tightening the noose around Baghdad. The writer said that while Washington openly declares its support of the Palestine National Authority in its quest to achieve peace with Israel despite Hamas's opposition, it is continuing to freeze the Palestinian leadership's assets in the U.S. banks. The Egyptian President, Hosni Mubarak, is not the only person expressing dissatisfaction with such American policies, said the writer. Most governments of the region are showing discontent. The writer said Washington ought to re-examine its policy and address the situation, which is costing Washington its credibility.

Human Rights File

By Waleed Sa'di

Pensioners' rights should be realised

LATE LAST year, His Majesty King Hussein took a bold step to rectify the dire economic conditions of military and civil service pensioners by calling on the government of former prime minister Abdul Salam Majali to improve pensions across the board. The government of Majali took the easy course by instituting increments to all pensioners on a rather uniform basis with relatively little variance between very old, old and recent pensioners.

The picture that emerged from this initiative and the governmental reaction left much to be desired, especially when it basically left the very old and old pensioners essentially where they have always been. To add 25 dinars to the salary of an old pensioner, whose base pension, for example, is below JD 100, would simply keep him or her essentially in the same old dire economic condition. Instead of near uniform increases in pensions, the government should have resorted to a contemporary scheme based on cost of living indexes.

Pension adjustments to keep pace with inflation would give much higher increases to old pensioners than new ones and in the process bridge the existing dangerous gap between the two categories. It must be remembered that an old junior pensioner has to live and has the right to live as a recent junior pensioner. The same goes for senior and semi-senior former civil servants or military personnel. The differences between their pensions cannot and should not be unreasonable since both old and new have to make ends meet.

This is where the government of Dr. Majali went wrong in the translation of King Hussein's directives into deeds. It

would have been infinitely wiser and more equitable had the government overhauled the entire pension law by introducing the cost of living index formula. With pensions linked to the index on cost of living, there would be no need to take periodic actions to alleviate the hardships of pensioners. The adoption of the index-based pension plan would automatically adjust pensions old and new in accordance with the prevailing cost of living and in the process end the unfair disparity between old and new pensioners. This has been the practice of other countries, especially the most advanced ones among them.

This issue is obviously a human rights concern since the right to live decently is a cornerstone of all human rights endeavours. Eliminating differential treatment between old and new pensioners is also a cardinal principle in human rights law that needs to be reckoned with fairly and squarely. That's why advanced countries do not apply the existing Jordanian pension system. No wonder many pensioners from both the military and civil sectors were not satisfied with their lot even after the King's first directive on the subject. Due to the pestering injustice with regard to old pensioners, a team representing retired servicemen have sought and received audience with King Hussein in mid Ramadan in a bid to explain further their plight. No doubt civil servants would have wished to be accorded a similar hearing had they also formed a comparable committee to represent them. Once again, the ex-military servicemen proved that they are much better organised than their ex-civil servants counterparts and more active

lobbyists for their cause and welfare. King Hussein reacted to their appeal and acted boldly and effectively when he called on Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker to complete what the former government had set out to accomplish but did not. The message of the King was loud and clear: Remove the unfair disparities between old and new pensioners from both the military and civil service. No doubt the Monarch wanted this aspect also dealt with in the first place but somehow some immediate constraints left his wishes half fulfilled.

The minister of finance then must have cautioned that bridging the gap as suggested would entail huge expenditures that the government can ill-afford. I feel that such an answer does not correspond with the reality.

But one easy way out of this is to put on hold increases in pensions of new pensioners till there can be a fundamental amendment on the pensions of the older generations of retired military and civil servants. The principal aim should be to erase the huge differences between the different generations of pensioners before attempting to improve even more the pensions of most recent ones.

Ending the disparity in the pensions of the two groups should be the primary objective even if at the expense of recent pensioners. There is no doubt the government of Sharif Zeid will this time act on the reaffirmed royal directive. We all should be grateful for the clear vision of King Hussein on this issue and thank him for coming to the rescue of a large group of Jordanians who had been done injustice for much too long.

Is Algeria staring disaster in the face?

By Francis Ghiles

"VISITS TO the cemetery are increasingly frequent. Gravestones are lined up as in Sarajevo, in a sinister, chronological order." Thus in a few sparse words does the Spanish writer, Juan Goytisolo, sum up the violence which has engulfed Algeria since, in January 1992, its military rulers cancelled elections the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) seemed sure to win. Despite the barbarity of the acts committed by the Armed Islamic Group (GIA). Mr. Goytisolo's lucid account convincingly explains that the roots of the present violence spring less from religious convictions than from a deep-seated sense of economic and social injustice.

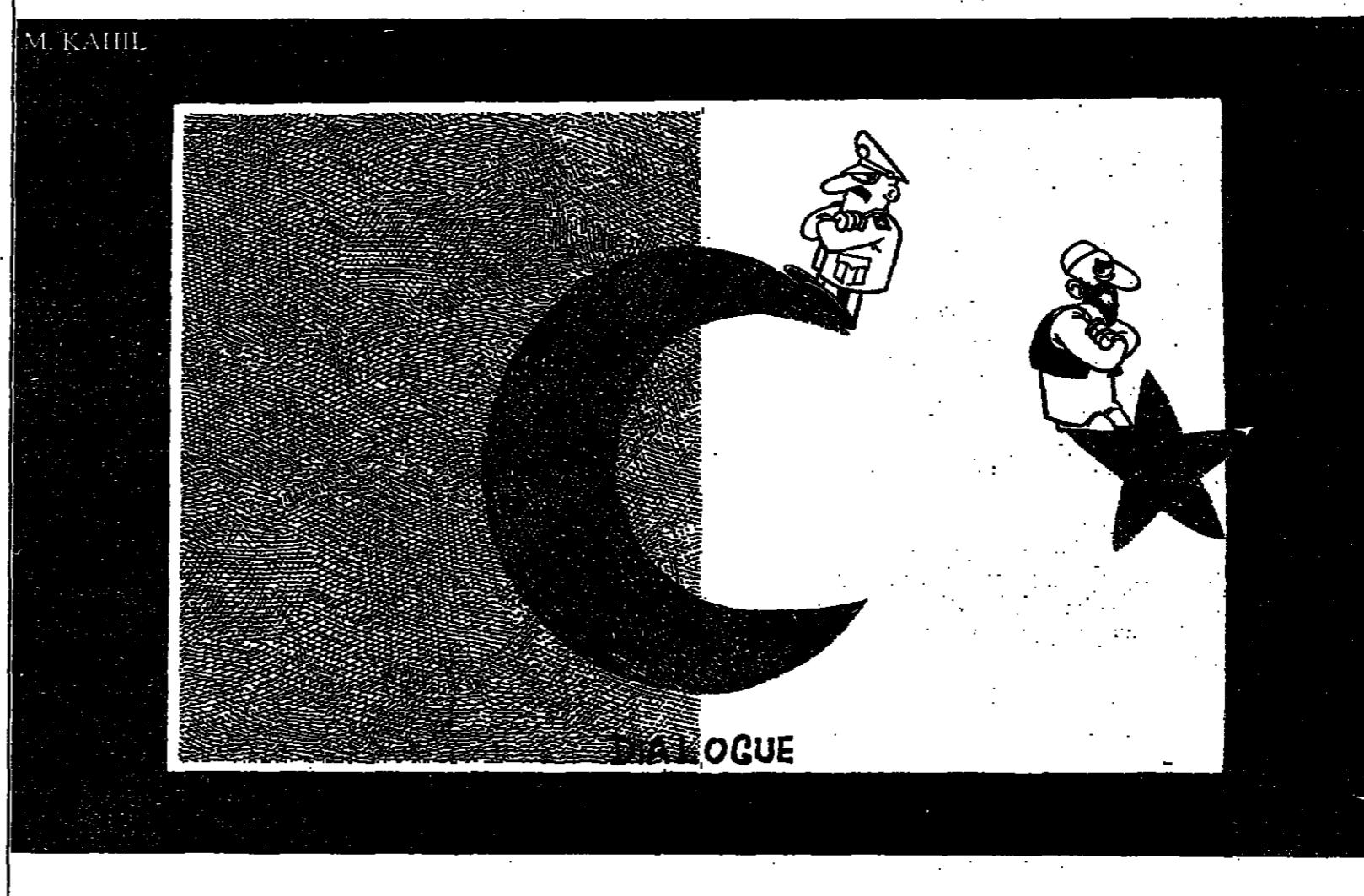
So far, the major impact of the conflict has been human — up to 40,000 people have been killed, hundreds if not thousands tortured, while tens of thousands of professionally qualified Algerians have taken refuge abroad. The atrocities committed by supporters of radical Islamic movements and members of the security forces and television images encouraging Algerians to hate or fear their neighbours will have an enduring pathological effect on the minds of the young. The civil war is also having an ever more costly economic impact.

To date, it has not had any negative impact on the country's ability to export oil, gas and condensates. No attacks have been perpetrated against oil or gas pipelines, against oil refineries, liquefied natural gas (LNG) plants or other hardware in the two hydrocarbons export bases, the ports of Arzew just outside Oran, the capital of western Algeria and the country's second city, and Skikda, which lies to the east, half way between Algiers and the Tunisian border. Were such attacks to occur, they could cripple an economy which depends for 96 per cent of its foreign income on the export of oil and gas.

Mounting economic cost

The economic cost of the conflict is nonetheless steadily mounting, with the amount of physical damage already inflicted on the infrastructure estimated at around \$3bn. More than 600 schools have been put to the torch, as have 30 institutes of higher education, as the GIA has sought to prevent young Algerians from being educated by an "impious state." Telephone exchanges have been destroyed, factories severely damaged or burnt down, state-owned vehicles destroyed. The burning of forests by the security forces attempting to flush out GIA groups will have a severe impact on an environment badly damaged by an ambitious policy of industrialisation which never paid much attention to the amount of scarce farming land and water resources it was consuming.

The general state of insecurity and political upheaval means that neither industrial plant nor civilian buildings, notably Algeria's housing stock, which is of poor quality when new or otherwise very old, are being maintained. Dams



and ports are slowly silting up. The bill is already a heavy one.

One senior member of the state oil and gas company, Sonatrach, Arezki Boudjema, was murdered last autumn. So were two foreign engineers working for Schlumberger on a drilling site near Batna in the mountains south east of Algiers. The hijacking on Christmas Eve of the Air France Airbus at Algiers airport has revived fears that terrorists might target Sonatrach's facilities in Arzew and Skikda.

Last year, exports of natural gas amounted to 31.5bn cubic metres, 18.1bn of which were in the form of LNG.

According to the monthly *Gas Matters*, deliveries of LNG were severely curtailed last autumn as a result of the delay in starting up the GL2Z gas liquefaction train in Arzew, which is being revamped by US contractor MW Kellogg. The closure lasted twice as long as the 45 days initially planned. This, however, is a once-in-20 years operation and the terminal was back in service by Christmas. The delay and its impact on shipments during the peak season mainly explains why LNG exports last year declined by 10 per cent. Exports of piped gas, which go to Italy through the Trans-Med pipeline, declined by 10 per cent to 13.5bn cu m due to a combination of mild weather last autumn and the fact that the country had topped up its stored gas during the previous two years. The shortfall in sales is estimated to have cost Sonatrach up to \$300m.

Construction of the 1,850km Maghreb Europe Pipeline (MPE) which, by mid-1996, should add some 7.2bn cu m of gas to the annual pipeline export capacity of Sonatrach, appears to be going ahead

according to schedule. Three bases from which the work will be carried out are under construction, for the U.S. Bechtel company, which is in charge of that portion of the pipeline which runs 530 km from the gas field of Hassi R'Mel to the Moroccan frontier. Construction of the 540 km Moroccan section of the pipeline is on schedule, while the 45 km underwater pipeline to carry the gas across the Strait of Gibraltar to Spain and Portugal was completed last December.

Economic reforms held up

The rising tide of violence also calls into question the ability of the Algerian government to implement the package of economic reform it agreed with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) last spring. Backed up by a \$1bn IMF loan and followed by a rescheduling of that part of its \$26bn foreign debt it owed to leading Western state creditors, the agreement is due to be renewed next spring. Algeria's foreign creditors are increasingly doubtful that loss-making state companies can be restructured, let alone privatised, with a minimum of political consensus. They are convinced it would spell political disaster if shares in such companies were sold to members of the ruling *nomenklatura* and their business intermediaries. People who have used the long-standing state monopoly of foreign trade as a means of illicit enrichment for a quarter of a century and whose hold on the levers of power helps to explain the predicament the country is now in. In announcing in early February that Algeria would seek another one-year agreement with the IMF rather

than the more usual three-year one, Algerian Finance Minister Ahmad Benbitour implicitly acknowledged that the option of "deepening" the reforms was simply not realistic.

Many of the reforms agreed with the IMF have been enacted: The budget deficit has been cut from 9.3 to 5.4 per cent of gross national product, many prices have been freed, the dinar has been devalued by 43 per cent since last spring. But economic growth, which the IMF had projected would be 3 per cent, has only reached 0.4 per cent, an increase which offers little prospect of desperately needed new jobs — there are 250,000 new entrants on the labour market every year. Nor has Algeria truly liberalised its foreign trade, many say.

The director-general of the IMF, Michel Camdessus, has spearheaded efforts to mobilise Algeria's creditors to support the package of reforms. He described Algeria's economic reforms as a "model for developing countries" at last October's annual meeting in Madrid.

Many banks and diplomats are less sanguine. As it is, Algeria has yet to reach agreement with its commercial bank creditors on the terms on which it can reschedule that part of its foreign commercial bank debt which is now due. Commercial banks do not wish to be seen in any way "favouring" a government, indeed a regime, which may have to give way to different political forces in the near future.

Economic relations with Western countries, with which Algeria conducts three-quarters of its trade, are further hampered by the growing isolation the country finds itself in. All foreign companies and embassies have cut their staff to the bone or pulled

out altogether. Some countries have closed their embassies in Algiers — Denmark, Austria and Switzerland have moved their operations to Tunis. Foreign schools, notably the French, have closed. Others have moved their consular sections to Tunis or France, thus effectively making it impossible for most Algerians to travel abroad. Iberia, Air France and Alitalia, the only Western airlines which were flying to Algeria last autumn, have suspended their service until further notice, although Arab airlines such as Tunis Air and Royal Air Maroc still fly there. Because most international companies do not allow their representatives to visit the country, delays are growing as Sonatrach representatives are forced to travel abroad more often. The two dozen oil companies which are drilling in southern Algeria are flying personnel in directly from Paris or Tunis to the oil base Hassi Messaoud.

It is worth noting however that some areas of Algeria are not under curfew. This is notably the case of Oran and its immediate hinterland. People have been murdered in Oran but the atmosphere has less of the gloom and fear which hovers over the city of Algiers and the region around it, which has witnessed some of the worst violence.

Where does France stand?

The hijacking of the Air France plane suggests the GIA intends to carry violence into France. The longer the political stalemate goes on, the more violent the conflict is likely to become and the greater the likelihood of terrorism, spreading abroad if the

GIA decides to "punish" those countries which it argues are lending undue support to the regime. Had there been a bloodbath on the tarmac in Algiers, the presidential ambitions of French Prime Minister Balladur would have been dashed. Hence the shift in the French position since then, away from the strong backing that the interior minister, Charles Fiterman, had given to the Algerian regime towards the more moderate position supported by Foreign Minister Juppé.

Hence also Mr. Juppé's conciliatory remarks after the meeting which brought together in Rome eight Algerian opposition parties in January. Together these parties polled nearly 90 per cent of the popular vote in the first round of the elections of late 1991. The platform they agreed upon was denounced by the Algerian government and those senior army commanders who still believe they can "eradicate" fundamentalism. Other officers have given support to those attempting a dialogue, not because they support the idea of an Islamic republic, even less because they entertain any illusion about the difficulty of reaching a minimal political consensus after three years of strife. But they are aware that Algeria could well be staring disaster in the face. If the current confrontation between the fundamentalists and the army goes on much longer, and the country's oil and gas earning capacity is impaired, the ensuing chaos would make governing Algeria an even less enviable task than it is at present.

Francis Ghiles is a writer and consultant on North African affairs. The article is reprinted from *Middle East International*.

America's changing priorities

What matters now is trade not the cold war, not tanks but Toyotas

In this report, Martin Walker finds the U.S. is redefining where its interests lie

IT WAS foreign policy that made Jay Murrell record a tape in his living room, round up a couple of businessmen as sponsors, and cajole his local radio station in Shreveport, Louisiana, into making him a talk-show host.

"It was disgust, I guess. Bill Clinton got elected because he said he was gonna be our president, and old George Bush was president for just about everywhere else on the planet. And then Clinton gets in and it's Bosnia. It's Somalia. It's Haiti. It's foreign aid for Russia and it's bailing out Mexico. It's the U.N. It's tarnation everywhere except America."

That is the demotic version of the line of Jeane Kirkpatrick, President Reagan's ambassador to the U.N., who claims: "The Clinton administration offers us a vision of foreign policy from which national self-interest is purged."

In similar vein, David Funderburk represents the new face of American foreign policy. As a former U.S. ambassador, he is by far the most experienced of the 73 new Republican congressmen. But he walked out of his embassy in Romania in 1985, declaring that on principle the U.S. should have no relations with the Ceausescu regime.

"We are lurching from crisis to crisis without anyone in the White House bothering to identify our own national security interests," he says. "Unless our foreign priorities are overhauled, we'll surrender the initiative to pariahs like North Korea, Iraq, Iran and Libya — if we haven't done so already."

Mr. Funderburk could be called the congressman for the U.S. expeditionary force. Tens of thousands of his constituents come from Fort Bragg, home of the 82nd Airborne and U.S. special forces, and from the airmen of Pope air force base, who carry them to war.

"Seventeen men from Fort Bragg died in Somalia for something they call nation-building. When they are asked to risk their lives, I'll do everything I can to ensure it is only to defend



BUTTER BEFORE GUNS: Workers unloading American computers in Zhongguancun, Beijing's 'Silicon Valley'. China's vast economic potential is about to

fulfill the dreams of some faceless bureaucrat at the U.N."

The demonising of the U.N. is the main thrust of the new Republican Congress and its speaker, Newt Gingrich, who says the Clinton administration is "gripped by a multinational fantasy and continues to subordinate the United States to the United Nations."

Rather more nationalist than previous speakers, Mr. Gingrich brings a flavour of American Gaulism to his support for prestige projects like space stations. But he supported the Mexican bail-out, supports NATO and its extension into Eastern Europe, and backs Mr. Clinton's free-trade strategy.

The British ambassador to the U.S., Sir Robin Renwick, sees bipartisan internationalism holding up pretty well, even as it shifts from leading a military alliance against the Soviet Union to leading a global economic process based on free trade.

"Whether you look at the Clinton administration, or at the various Republican candidates who will challenge for the presidency in 1996, they are all interna-

tionalists and they are all free-traders," Sir Robin said.

Senator Phil Gramm, the Republican 1996 presidential frontrunner in fundraising and organisation, proves Sir Robin's point.

"There has always been a receptive gene in the American character that is isolationist," Mr. Gramm said. "That gene had been recessive for over a generation because our leaders were willing to stand up and say no to it. Today there are elements in both parties, but more in the Democrats, who are not prepared to say no."

"There is nobody in our party more committed to free trade than me, or more committed to fulfilling our leadership role in the world," Mr. Gramm said.

"Beyond trade, this need for U.S. leadership is so important you cannot weigh the politics of it. Now the lion and the lamb may be lying down together all over the world, but even in that world, we Republicans are committed to being the world."

Senator Robert Dole, the Republican presidential hopeful who leads in the opinion polls, says he established his internationalist credentials 50 years ago when his arm was shattered

by German bullets on an Italian battlefield.

Mr. Dole exemplifies the new fault line in U.S. foreign priorities. He entirely supports the free-trade agenda, but he dislikes the U.N., and shrinks from sending U.S. troops overseas.

And despite the old rule that party politics stopped at the water's edge, Mr. Dole has exploited Mr. Clinton's clumsiness in Somalia and Haiti, and his dithering over Bosnia.

"The one thing that Clinton and Dole and Gingrich have in common is that they realise the foreign policy agenda has changed," says Francis Fitzgerald, whose book on the history of America in Vietnam, *Fire in the Lake*, won a Pulitzer Prize.

"There's a big constituency out there for human rights, a huge one for foreign trade, but the classic agenda of NATO and the European balance of power just seems irrelevant. Maybe Asia seems closer, because if foreign policy used to be about tanks, now it seems to be about Toyotas. But what people have thought of as classic foreign policy throughout my lifetime — the Kremlin and Europe — just doesn't connect to people's lives any more."

occupy more of U.S. foreign policy plan-troops on United Nations peacekeeping mission is waning in Washington

secretary of state, "the creation of a global, liberal economic regime is America's greatest post-war achievement." For Mr. Clinton's national security adviser, Tony Lake, U.S. strategy is to build a "global civil society through enlargement of the core of major market democracies."

There is a Clinton doctrine, although he is too wary of the protectionists in his own party to trumpet it a loud. It is plain in Mr. Clinton's readiness to split his party to enact the North American Free Trade Agreement and to ratify the Uruguay Round of the GATT world trade system.

It is plainer still in his cajoling of the Asia-Pacific Economic Conference to endorse his plan for a Pacific Rim free-trade zone by the year 2020, and last December's Miami summit where the countries of the Western Hemisphere agreed to their own free trade area from Alaska to Argentina by 2010.

The Clinton doctrine is that Mr. Clinton's problem is that most Americans think of foreign trade as a deficit of more than \$100 billion a year. That is true for manufactured trade, but the U.S. surplus on services, from banking to

royalties and licence fees, was \$80 billion last year. And the fact that U.S.-owned factories overseas command a greater share of global manufacturing exports than factories on U.S. soil means that, in fact, the U.S. runs a modest profit on its dealings with a global economy, which contributes about a quarter of America's GDP.

Mr. Clinton is already bidding for history's mantle as the free trade president, the first world leader who understood that the geo-strategic world of the cold war had become a new age of geo-economics. Or he was, until the Mexican financial crisis and the looming trade war with China undermined the promise of the free trading doctrine.

To Art Hilgart, a retired pharmaceutical executive in Kalamazoo, Michigan, who circulates a small newsletter steeped in jazz and traditional liberalism, it is not Mr. Clinton nor Mr. Gingrich, nor even the end of the cold war, that has altered foreign policy, but the changing U.S. economy.

"The real difference is fear," says Mr. Hilgart. "Americans are more frightened for their own economic future, so they are less willing to help any

other group. That includes Americans on welfare or foreigners of any kind. The old security we had for a generation after World War II, when most people with a job could expect to buy a house and send a kid to college, has just gone."

Sidney Blumenthal can claim to have predicted the drift to U.S. isolation in his book on the 1988 presidential election, *Pledging Allegiance*, the last campaign of the Cold War. Having turned down an offer to be Mr. Clinton's speechwriter, Mr. Blumenthal worries about the political implications of the president's free trade enthusiasm.

"A regime of free trade that at the same time is widening class divisions cannot sustain internationalism. It is seen as the property of the privileged, those insulated from the buffeting of the global market," he argues. "We reduce foreign policy to raw economic rewards, and oppose international commitments because they siphon resources away from home."

"Internationalism in the post-war era was fitted to the society made by the New Deal, a society that was becoming both richer and more equal, and could therefore act and think as one. Social harmony at home, achieved by reform, provided the bedrock for the active internationalism of the Cold War. That bedrock has now gone. We are now a polarised society, breeding new class conflicts through divisive politics and social resentment."

If American society is fragmenting, so is the world it wants to deal with. Europeans fear a diminished U.S. involvement. Asians fear they are being forced to swallow too much. The desperately poor world fears the end of foreign aid, while free trade partners like Mexico gape at the price of a U.S. bail-out, which demands their oil production as collateral.

A weak president seeks to maintain America's global influence on the cheap, scaling back the military commitments while turning a bigger profit through ever more free trade.

If the model looks familiar, it is Britain's splendid isolation of the 19th century. But that depended on a political will to enforce a Pax Britannica, which looks unlikely from a superpower that scuttles from Somalia after losing 18 soldiers in a day. And Pax Britannica ended in the first world war.

The Guardian

Crown Prince meets businessmen

(Continued from page 1)

development of the Jordan Valley and the general agricultural and industrial sectors.

On the level of the citizens and expectations of fruits of peace, the Crown Prince said Jordan was expecting external help, and this could come in the form of budget sup-

Two weeklies suspended

(Continued from page 12)

port or in write-off of the Kingdom's debts.

However, such help might not mean direct and immediate benefits to the citizen, he said, adding that a distinction should be made between major regional economic initiatives and the movement of foreign capital and Jordan's economic needs.

According to Mr. Tourah, his newspaper faced overstate- ment and confiscation several times before and after the enactment of the press law.

Hawadeth Al Sa'ab was licensed in June. Riad Al Hroub, publisher of Hawadeth Al Sa'ab and Shitan, accused the government of conspiring against them.

"They (the government) are looking for ways to hurt us," he said. "I believe it is done on purpose."

Dr. Hroub said he will appoint a new but temporary chief editor until Mr. Shawar-

heen takes the oath.

The two newspapers as well as Shitan, have come under attack by JPA because of what the association described as the newspapers' tendency to overstate facts and publish material that infringes on general ethics and moral standards.

In a memo sent last month to the chief editors of the three weeklies the JPA threatened to refer them to a disciplinary council if they failed to comply with the pertinent laws and regulations. JPA charged then that the newspapers were publishing fabricated stories, obscene photos and inaccurate news.

However, Mr. Amin said his decision to close the two weeklies "has nothing to do with other issues." He said he was "only applying the law."

Aloni proposes land swap

(Continued from page 1)

Strip's 800,000 residents she could move to the area, she said.

Ahmad Qouriea, econo-

mic minister in the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) rejected the proposal, saying: "Expanding the Gaza Strip should not be at the expense of other Palestinian land in the West Bank."

Palestinians have demanded a halt to all settlement activity, especially in Israel's vaguely defined "greater Jerusalem" area, encompassing Arab East Jerusalem.

Palestinians view settle- ments as a provocation and,

having taken over most of the Gaza Strip under a peace deal with Israel, now seek the return of all of the West Bank.

Environment Minister Yossi Sarid, who belongs to Ms. Aloni's Meretz faction, this month proposed paying Palestinians one billion shekels (\$333.3 million) a year while barring them from Israel to prevent attacks inside the Jewish state. That idea has yet to catch on.

More than 140,000 Jews live among one million Palestinians in the West Bank.

Four years after the war, Kuwaitis less enchanted with U.S.

By Diana Elias

The Associated Press

KUWAIT — Dancing in the streets and waving American flags, Kuwaitis four years ago had nothing but gratitude and admiration for their U.S. saviors.

They would brook no criticism of the country that led the 33-nation coalition which liberated the tiny, oil-rich emirate from seven months of Iraqi occupation on Feb. 26, 1991.

Today the mood is less buoyant.

American clothes, cars, pop music, trends and styles are still popular, especially among the young. And pictures of former president George Bush, regarded as the man who assembled the Gulf war coalition, hang on walls in offices, stores and homes.

But more and more Kuwaitis are grouching about what they perceive as heavy-handed U.S. efforts to force the tiny emirate to help achieve peace between Israel and the Arabs and to remain a regular client for U.S. arms.

Some also doubt America's sincerity, believing the Western giant is more interested in Kuwait's oil wealth than its social, political and economic health.

Others are critical of the U.S. for its role in the 1991 Gulf war.

Officially, Kuwait backs

the peace process with Israel and says it will normalize relations with the Jewish state.

The grass roots support for the United States is still very solid. But there have been some dissenting voices.

Dissent becomes particu-

larly noticeable on the issue of Israel and its relations with the Arab World.

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Business Gally Great

A review
of economic news
from the Arabic press

Airports' upgrading to cost JD 60m

★★ Jordan plans to spend \$85 million over the next three years on upgrading its airports to absorb an expected tourism boom now it has made peace with Israel, officials reported Sunday. It was not immediately clear how the resource-poor kingdom hopes to raise the funds for refurbishing terminals, repaving runways and modernising communications at its airport in Amman, Marka and the southern port of Aqaba. Proposals submitted by Jordan at an economic conference in Casablanca, Morocco, late last year indicated that some money was expected from donor countries. Officials confirmed figures cited by Civil Aviation Authority chief Ahmad Jweider to an interview with the mass-circulation Al Ra'i daily. He said the government has drawn up a 1995-98 plan to upgrade airports at a cost of around 60 million dinars (\$85 million). Thirteen million dinars (\$18.5 million) will be spent this year, he said, with 16 million dinars (\$22.75 million) each in 1996 and 1997 and 13.7 million dinars (\$19.5 million) in 1998. Under the Oct. 26 peace treaty that ended 46 years of hostility between Jordan and Israel, they agreed to offer joint tourism packages to the Holy Land to Americans. Both countries are rich in religious, historical and archaeological sites that date back to Biblical times. But Jordan has not been able to take full advantage of that potential because it lacks facilities while Israel has pursued an aggressive campaign to market itself. After the treaty, Royal Jordanian and El Al, the two countries' national carriers, also agreed that American tourists could land in Jordan and leave from Israel and vice-versa after spending equal time in both countries. Amman's Queen Alia International Airport, 20-30 kilometres south of the capital, is Jordan's main civil aviation facility. Marka Airport, located within the capital's boundaries, was the main international airport until 1984. Now it mainly serves VIPs and military flights. The airport at Aqaba on the Red Sea, about 330 kilometres south of Amman, is the key to the envisaged tourism packages with Israel, whose own Eilat airport a few kilometres across the Gulf of Aqaba, is unable to handle the heavy flow of visitors to the Jewish state. According to the projects presented in Casablanca, an estimated \$40 million will be spent on expanding Aqaba's airport "to accommodate Israeli traffic." That will include the construction of a new runway and terminal buildings (Al Ra'i + AP).

★★ PEOPLE who missed the deadline for obtaining their subsidy coupons for rice, sugar and milk have been given a grace period. The grace period begins from March 6 until March 31. An official source at the Ministry of Supply revealed that about 100,000 people will be dropped from the list of beneficiaries next year as their salaries have been found to be in excess of JD 500 per month (Al Ra'i + AP).

★★ IT SEEMS that the negotiations which started two months ago between representatives of the Arab Bank Ltd. management and the employees' committee have reached a dead end. According to the members of the committee, the management's representatives were indecisive and could not make a definite commitment, meaning that the final decision was a centralised one. The head of the association for banks' employees said the association will be formally taking the case to find a solution for the conflict. More than 1,600 Arab Bank employees are seeking higher salaries and more fringe benefits (Al Ra'i)

Loss at blueblood London bank triggers rescue bid

LONDON (R) — The Bank of England worked against the clock Sunday to rescue a firm of venerable British bankers that faced a loss worth perhaps \$650 million, apparently run up by just one of its traders based in Singapore.

Queen Elizabeth is a client. Founded in 1762, it helped finance Britain's 19th century wars against Emperor Napoleon Bonaparte of France.

From what banking sources said Sunday, it seemed that a Baring trader in Singapore ran up a losing position when trading in derivative contracts linked to Tokyo share values.

"There must be a resolution of this issue one way or other before the Tokyo market opens," one banking source said.

The sources said that, if the bank's supervisory procedures were watertight and properly enforced, then one possible explanation could be fraud.

The potential losses may exceed Baring's capital.

Bank of England Governor

Eddie George himself supervised the negotiations on the gravest crisis in British banking for more than 10 years — with a deadline before midnight London time (GMT) when a jittery Tokyo stock market starts trading.

"There must be a resolution of this issue one way or other before the Tokyo market opens," one banking source said.

A Baring's official in Hong Kong confirmed that a trader in Singapore had lost the bank substantial sums in derivatives deals related to Japan's Nikkei 225 stock index.

London bankers said the Baring's dealer bought between 15,000 and 20,000 derivatives contracts worth almost \$200,000 each hoping for massive profits. But the gamble failed.

Derivatives — including futures, options and swaps — are traded contracts linked to basic values of commodities, currencies, shares or bonds.

Designed for hedging, they also attract speculative money. Profits from speculative trade can be huge. But so can losses if a trader bets one way and a market swings the other.

The Bank of England's George could put family firm Barings and its 4,000 employees around the globe under an administrator. But he is more likely to be looking for a buyer for all or part.

A big British or U.S. investment bank might be eager to snap up Baring asset management, a highly profitable unit that manages more than \$45 billion of assets for pension and other big funds and private individuals worldwide.

The affair's impact on world markets will depend on how convincing the rescue looks. Japanese stocks may be vulnerable.

"I believe the Nikkei average will fall from the start even if the reports are not confirmed" said Masaharu

Sakudo, general manager at Tachibana Securities in Tokyo.

An ailing British pound, pressured largely by the political woes of Conservative Prime Minister John Major, also risks a taking new hit on the foreign exchanges.

"It's just one more negative for sterling" said Nick Persons at finance house CIBC Wood Gundy.

Britain's opposition Labour Party joined a worldwide chorus that has demanded tighter control on speculative trading in derivatives — for Barings is just the latest in a series of cases where traders have lost huge sums.

German industrial group Metallgesellschaft A.G. lost \$1.5 billion in 1993 on oil derivatives deals at a U.S. subsidiary. State-owned Chilean copper mining giant Codelco lost some \$170 million in 1994 on trading in metals futures.

"Derivatives are probably

the oldest traded markets anywhere in the world," said Chris Golden, head of fixed income research at Nomura International in London.

He said rice futures were traded in Japan centuries ago.

Emergency talks were under way to sell Barings or some of its businesses before Tokyo markets open on Monday morning.

If Barings is not bailed out by that deadline, traders fear it may not be able to meet its obligations in Asia, with major repercussions on regional and international financial markets.

Analysts in Japan said the news could send Tokyo's stock market receding downward by up to 1,000 points at Monday's opening. Singapore dealers fear Tokyo will drag other Asia markets down.

Reuters reporters saw representatives of the stock exchange of Singapore entering and leaving the high-rise building where the bank has offices at various times throughout Sunday. They remained silent on the issue or would not comment.

Monetary Authority of Singapore (MAS) officials were meeting with Barings representatives in the evening at MAS premises, said a man who answered MAS's telephone but declined to be identified.

The MAS oversees financial institutions in the tiny island-state, which has been carefully cultivating its image as a regional financial centre.

Dealers on the Singapore International Monetary Exchange (SIMEX) also expect sharp drops on Monday if Barings tries to unload its remaining futures contracts on the market.

A Barings official in Hong Kong confirmed the disaster was brought on when a derivatives trader in Singapore lost huge amounts of money on Nikkei-225 futures contracts.

"They don't seriously know what has happened. They're investigating it," a source from the British merchant bank Barings PLC told Reuters as officials hustled in and out of the bank's Singapore office Sunday.

"We have no comment. We're referring all matters to London," a nervous, grim-looking executive said.

Barings officials elsewhere in Asia would not comment for the record about the crisis, triggered when one trader in Singapore reportedly lost more than \$400 million (\$635 million), more than the bank's entire net worth.

A company source in Hong Kong confirmed the magnitude of the problem, saying: "Either we get bought out very quickly or we shut down."

As early evening thunderstorms swept over Singapore, another Barings source said officials from the bank's

Financial Markets in co-operation with Cairo Amman Bank

Foreign Exchange Market Summary (February 20 - February 24, 1995)

AMMAN — The dollar depreciated against other major currencies last week, especially against the mark. It ended the week 1.37 per cent lower against the mark, 0.36 per cent lower against the yen and 0.38 per cent against sterling.

The U.S. unit stabilised against the mark and the yen Monday, while rising against sterling. Reports indicated that little trading took place as many traders were absent on holiday. Comments from the U.S. Treasury Department, indicating that there was progress in securing Mexico's \$20 billion loan, did not have any impact on the market.

The dollar dropped sharply against European currencies Tuesday, while retreating modestly against the yen. The dollar's decline came in view of the mark's appreciation against the Italian and French currencies. The mark's appreciation against the Italian currency came despite a decision by the Bank of Italy to raise its discount rate to 8.25 per cent. Comments by Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia President Edward Boehne also contributed to the dollar's decline. Mr. Boehne said that the dollar was always of concern, but the Fed has no interest in intervening in the markets when they are working well.

The dollar continued its decline against the yen and sterling Wednesday, while stabilising against the mark. The dollar's decline came following comments by Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan before the Senate Banking Committee. Mr. Greenspan indicated that there were signs the U.S. economy was slowing and that the Fed might hold its monetary policy unchanged for a while. He also indicated that the Fed might ease, under certain circumstances in the future.

The dollar declined against other major currencies Thursday, as it suffered from a decline in U.S. bond prices. The dollar was reported to have appreciated during trading hours as a result of traders' reaction to further comments by Mr. Greenspan who emphasised his desire to see a strong dollar.

At the end of the week, the dollar continued its depreciation against the mark, in view of the mark's rise against a number of major European currencies. The German currency reached a record high against the Italian and Spanish currencies and rose against the yen and Swiss franc, influenced by inflow of funds to Germany. Meanwhile, unconfirmed reports indicated that a number of European central banks have intervened in the market to support their currencies against the mark, including the Italian and Spanish central banks.

The U.S. unit, thus ended the week at 1.4610 marks, 96.95 yen and at \$1.5885 to sterling.

New York Closing Rates for Major Currencies Against the U.S. Dollar

Currency	17/2/95 Close	24/2/95 Close	Percent Change
Sterling Pound*	1.5875	1.5885	0.38%
Deutsche Mark	1.4810	1.4610	1.37%
Swiss Franc	1.2525	1.2455	0.58%
French Franc	5.1540	5.1485	0.11%
Japanese Yen	97.30	96.95	0.36%

* USD Per STG

Euro-Currency Interest Rates*

Currency	17/2/1995				24/2/1995			
	1-Month (%)	1-Year (%)						
U.S. Dollar	5.90	6.87	5.92	6.88				
Sterling Pound	6.44	7.68	6.43	7.62				
Deutsche Mark	4.75	5.58	4.88	5.63				
Swiss Franc	3.50	4.38	3.50	4.35				
French Franc	5.43	6.58	5.56	6.63				
Japanese Yen	2.18	2.37	2.18	2.37				

Interest and rates for minimum amounts U.S. Dollars 1,000,000 or equivalent.

Central Bank of Jordan Exchange Rate Bulletin

Date: 26/2/1995

Currency	Bid	Offer
U.S. Dollar	0.6940	0.6960
Sterling Pound	1.1073	1.1068
Deutsche Mark	0.4745	0.4769
Swiss Franc	0.5573	0.5601
French Franc	0.1347	0.1354
Japanese Yen*	0.7152	0.7188
Dutch Guilder	0.4831	0.4852
Swedish Krona	0.8888	0.8888
Italian Lira*	0.0424	0.0426
Belgian Franc	0.0000	0.0000

* Per 100

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Angry Agassi ousted by Enqvist

PHILADELHIA (Agencies) — Reigning U.S. and Australian Open Champion Andre Agassi lost his temper here Saturday.

As a result, the ATP's number two-ranked player also lost his first match of 1995 and was fined \$2,350.

Agassi hurled his racket four times, slammed a ball at a linesman and argued at length with umpire Carlos Bernades of Brazil during a 7-6 (7-5), 5-7, 6-2 loss to Sweden's Thomas Enqvist in the U.S. Indoor Championship semi-finals.

"I got distracted between my temper and feuding with the umpire," Agassi said. "I think it caused me to lose the third set."

Hard-serving Enqvist advanced to the final against defending champion Michael Chang, who needed only 51 minutes to eliminate Paul Haarhuis 6-2, 6-0 in the other semi-final. Chang will match his career-best ranking of fourth by winning the \$700,000 event.

Agassi stole the show by acting like the angry young man of bygone days. Instead of moving closer to world number one Pete Sampras, Agassi stunned himself at his own fury.

"It was surprising," he said. "I usually don't get like this. I got a bit more upset than I normally do."

The 10th opportunity to gain ground on Sampras hurt Agassi more than the fines. Agassi made \$30,000 for reaching the semi-finals here. The winner receives \$110,000.

The tantrums began in the first-set tie-breaker. Agassi smashed a ball at a linesman after a disputed call that made the score 3-3. The action toppled the serve radar monitor and cost Agassi \$350.

After Agassi was wide with a backhand on the final point, he tossed his racket and toppled a vase of roses.

on a table behind the umpire's chair. That cost Agassi a \$500 fine.

Agassi was two points from losing in the second set before winning 12 straight points, then breaking Enqvist's serve a second time to take the set.

In the third set, Agassi tossed his racket twice and later yelled at Bernades after he did not overrule a linesman, scratching his rear to end a conversation.

After losing the final point, Agassi threw his racket into the umpire's chair stand and was booted as he walked off the court. That cost him \$1,500.

"You can always make excuses for why you lose your temper, but there is none," a somewhat apologetic Agassi said.

"I think it's understandable. I certainly don't condone it. But I would be lying if I said I wasn't going to get angry again."

Agassi's loss snapped a 15-match win streak and doubled the number of sets he has lost this year.

Enqvist, who had 18 aces, also beat Agassi in their only prior meeting, a first-round match of the 1993 U.S. Open.

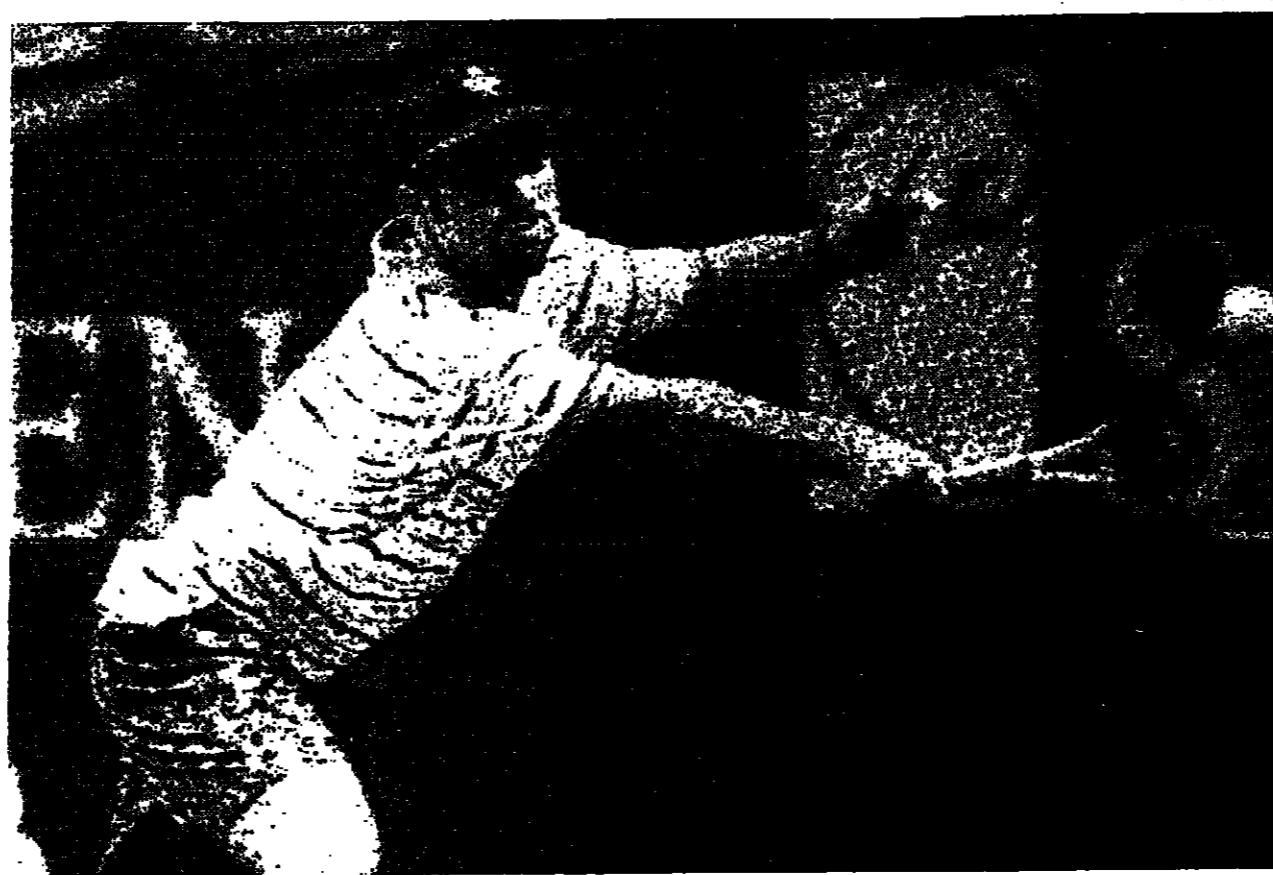
"It's an unbelievable feeling to beat the guy is number two in the world," Enqvist said. "It was very exciting. I got a little tight in the second set but I played well in the third."

Enqvist said he was not disturbed by Agassi's actions, but added that he was also unhappy with some calls.

"There were a lot of bad calls," he said. "I understand his frustration."

Chang won his final 11 games to beat Dutch rival Haarhuis in a rematch of last year's U.S. Indoor final. Haarhuis struggled through 24 unforced errors, three times as many as Chang.

"He looked very sluggish," Chang said. "It was not the



Andre Agassi

Paul Haarhuis I'm used to seeing."

Chang, who turned 23 last Wednesday, broke Haarhuis twice and lost only six games in the final five games of the first set.

"I wasn't looking ahead, even after that," Chang said. "I came out for the match thinking there were going to be a lot of tough rallies and long points."

Instead, Chang got a breather. Haarhuis, who won his first ATP title last month in Jakarta, could not match Chang's deep groundstrokes and steady returns.

"He didn't miss a shot," Haarhuis said. He moved me all around the court on his service games and made every return on my service games. When you play a guy like that, you're struggling to survive."

Stich, Krajicek reach final

As soon as he got up Saturday, Boris Becker knew it was going to be a hard day.

"He looked very sluggish," Chang said. "It was not the

At least the torture was over quickly.

The top-seeded Becker suffered one of his most embarrassing defeats at home, losing 6-0, 6-3 to fellow German and rival Michael Stich in the semifinals of the 1992 German Open in Hamburg.

Becker, a three-time Wimbledon champion who lost to Stich in the final there in 1991, won only 10 points in the first set. When he won his first game, at 3-1 in the second, he raised his arms in mock triumph.

"I was really worried that I was going to lose 6-0, 6-0," Becker said.

"He was unbelievable in the first nine games, he was great."

Stich was elated with one-sided victory over the player who remains more popular in Germany and with whom he has often feuded.

"I played a perfect match. It was one of those days when you touch the ball it goes where you want it to go," said Stich, who has dropped from No. 2 in the world to

But he seized control from the start and handed Becker one of his most humiliating defeats. The victory resembled Stich's 6-1, 6-1 triumph over Becker on clay in the semifinals of the 1992 German Open in Hamburg.

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No. 9.

Becker, ranked third, had his first break points at the start of the second set but wasted both. Just as he dropped the first set with a double-fault, he did the same to lose his serve in the second game.

"That was really the decisive moment," Stich said.

Becker had two more break points in the fifth game and two more in the last game, but he failed to convert any of them.

Stich closed the match with his ace No. 9. Becker had only two and committed six double-faults to Stich's four.

After losing in the first round of the Australian Open, Becker moved to the European indoor circuit, teaming up with Stich to carry Germany past Croatia in the Davis Cup, winning in Marseille, and losing in the final in Milan.

"I am very fit at the moment but I've played a lot of singles and doubles in the last four weeks," Becker said.

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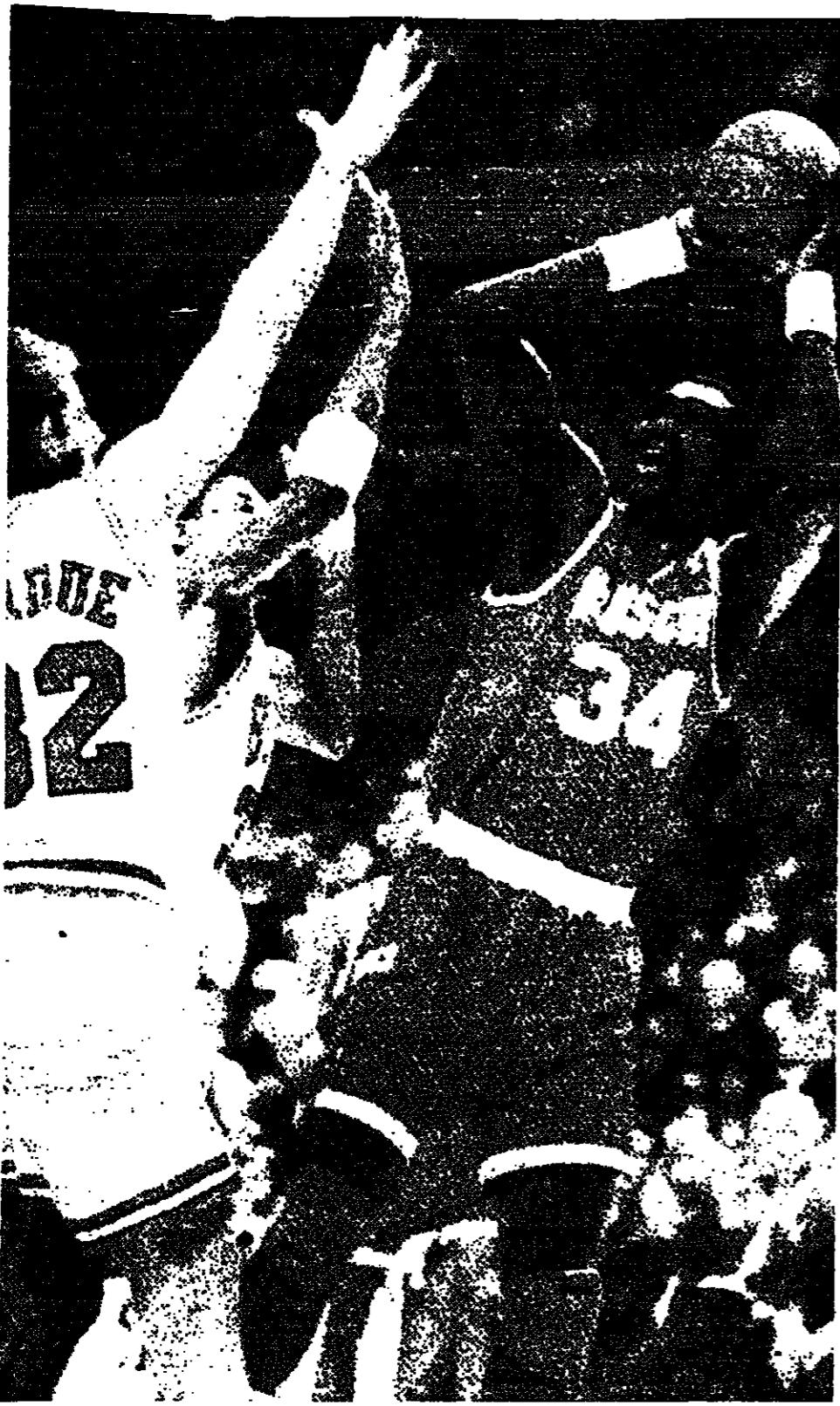
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Houston Rockets centre Hakeem 'the dream' Olajuwon makes a hasty shot under double coverage from two opponents (AFP photo)

Olajuwon leads Rockets past Warriors

HOUSTON (R) — Hakeem 'the dream,' Clyde 'the glide,' and now 'Mr. Spark.' How are you going to beat these guys? The Golden State Warriors are still working on it.

Sam Cassell came off the bench to score 11 of his 13 points and three 3-pointers in the fourth quarters as the Houston Rockets held off the Warriors 112-105 on Saturday.

"I like being 'the Spark,'" said Cassell, who also contributed a career-high 16 assists. "Everybody in the NBA wants to start, but this is nice. I'm Mr. Spark."

Hakeem 'the dream' Olajuwon finished with 38 points and 15 rebounds and Robert Horry added 16 points, 10 assists and eight rebounds for the NBA-champion Rockets.

Olajuwon missed his first six shots, but recovered to make 13 of his next 15 shots.

"The dream isn't anything to joke around with," said Golden State's Victor Alexander, who had the job of trying to stop Olajuwon. "He started out weak, but I knew it wouldn't last long, and it didn't."

Latrell Sprewell scored 30 points and Tim Hardaway added 24 points and eight assists for the Warriors, who have lost five of their last seven games. The Rockets have beaten the Warriors nine straight times dating back to January 2, 1993.

"We played a hell of a basketball game, except for the end," said Golden State coach Bob Lanier. "When we get better, we'll learn how to execute in crunch time. We're trying to learn how to play smart basketball, but they're a good team. I can't really complain about losing to them."

"(The Warriors) always seem to play very relaxed against the Rockets," Houston's Clyde 'the glide' Drexler said. "Maybe because they don't have anybody to guard Hakeem and they don't even try."

Drexler finished with 22 points, seven rebounds and

six assists for the Rockets, who amassed a season-high 44 assists. Houston improved to 5-2 since acquiring Drexler from Portland for Otis Thorpe earlier this month.

In a battle for Los Angeles, Loy Vaught scored 27 points as the host Clippers held off a furious fourth-quarter rally to edge the Lakers 83-81.

Nick Van Exel's layup brought the Lakers within 83-81 with 29.8 seconds to play. After a Clipper miss, the Lakers had three chances to tie the game as Van Exel, Sedale Threatt and Lloyd Daniels all missed shots in the final 11.6 seconds.

Lamond Murray added 17 points for the Clippers (10-45 and in last place in the Pacific Division), who beat the third-place Lakers (34-18) for the second time in five encounters this season.

Maldivac scored 10 of his 20 points in the fourth quarter for the Lakers and Van Exel added 16. The Lakers lost for the second time in their last 10 games.

The Lakers outscored the Clippers 29-16 in the fourth quarter — exactly the opposite result of the third quarter.

In Cleveland, Danny Ferry hit a 3-pointer with 12 seconds remaining to lift the injury-riddled Cavaliers to a 105-102 victory over the New Jersey Nets, sweeping the season series.

Ferry finished a career-high 24 points for Cleveland, which was playing without four of its starters.

Tony Campbell scored 13 of his season-high 23 points in the fourth quarter for the Cavaliers, who closed within a half-game of the first-place Charlotte Hornets in the Central Division.

Christ Morris scored a season-high 31 points and Jayson Williams added a career-high 20 for the Nets, who have dropped three of their last four games.

Cleveland was playing without injured Mark Price, Tyrone Hill, Bobby Phills

and hot Rod Williams.

O'Neal suspended for punching Montross

Orlando Magic centre Shaquille O'Neal was suspended on Saturday for one game and fined \$5,000 for punching Eric Montross of the Boston Celtics during a game Friday night.

The punishment was announced by NBA vice president of operations Rod Thorn.

O'Neal, the league's leading scorer, will miss a home game Sunday afternoon against the Chicago Bulls. He will be eligible to return for a key Atlantic Division game against the New York Knicks on Tuesday night.

O'Neal was ejected with 4:35 left in the first quarter of the Magic's 129-103 home-court win over Boston. He was whistled for a flagrant foul.

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RESULTS

Washington	102	Sacramento	98
Cleveland	105	New Jersey	102
Houston	112	Golden State	105
L.A. Clippers	83	L.A. Lakers	81

Boxer extremely critical after brain operation Surgeon: McClellan has 'good chance' of survival

LONDON (R) — American boxer Gerald McClellan has a "good chance of survival" said John Sutcliffe, the neuro-surgeon who performed life-saving operation on him in the early hours of Sunday morning.

McClellan collapsed with a blood clot on the brain after being stopped in the 10th round of his World Boxing Council super-middleweight title against Britain's Nigel Benn on Saturday night.

Amid new calls for a ban on boxing after the 10-round World Boxing Council bout, surgeons operated through the night to remove a blood clot from McClellan's brain.

A hospital official at the Royal London Hospital said he was heavily sedated and on a life-support machine in the hospital's trauma unit and was "likely to remain in this condition for some time."

The hospital said it was too soon to say how much damage McClellan may have sustained. It said his family had been made aware of the seriousness of his condition and were expected to fly into London from the United States later on Sunday.

A British safety official called for the sport to be banned, saying it was for boxers and a bad influence on children.

McClellan collapsed in the ring in the 10th round shortly after being counted out. He was given oxygen, his neck was put in a brace and he was removed by stretcher from the ring and taken to hospital.

Benn was also taken to hospital to have his jaw checked after three board doctors feared it may have been broken, but he was later released.

It had been a surprising performance by Benn, who



U.S. boxer Gerald McClellan being carried off a stretcher Saturday after he was counted out in the 10th round of his WBC super-middleweight fight against Britain's Nigel Benn

was widely expected to succumb to McClellan's monster punches.

Defending his title for the seventh time, Benn looked down and out when he was knocked through the ropes in a brutal opening round. But he rode the punches and made a remarkable recovery in the second.

In the ninth round, McClellan sank of his feet, claiming a head butt, which seemed to be all the incentive the desperately tired Benn needed.

McClellan, who had never previously been beyond eight rounds, went down for a count of seven in the 10th and after another right immediately went down for a full count.

He then lay prone as Benn

celebrated and was taken from the ring on a stretcher.

James Tye, director general of the British Safety Council, told Britain's GMTV that the fight had been an especially vicious one.

"I'm a little bit horrified

because right from the beginning of the fight there wasn't much boxing about it. Really

McClellan, who had never

it was one bloke trying to injure the other bloke's brain," he said.

"People don't understand this but what's really happening with boxing, the brain in like a blancmange," he said, comparing it to a rubbery pudding.

"Every time this evening, and hundreds of times it occurred, the blow is struck, the brain cracks against the inside of the hard skull, and it has the effect of numbing the brain or causing permanent brain damage."

John Sutcliffe, the neuro-surgeon who operated on McClellan, said bluntly after examining the boxer: "His brain was quite swollen, how we would expect a brain to look after it's been punched for (10) rounds. Hopefully it will not prove too serious but it will end his fighting career and it will kill him if it's (the clot) not taken out."

Tye said he would ask the government to ban "this so-called sport."

"All kinds of changes have been made but really the answer is to ban it," he said.

Williams faces questions over Senna death

ROME (R) — Formula One motor racing team boss Frank Williams faces questioning by Italian prosecutors over the crash in which world champion Ayrton Senna was killed at the San Marino Grand Prix last year.

Prosecutors must decide whether to recommend pressing manslaughter charges against 17 people including Williams, his technical director Patrick Head and officials of the Sauber Company that runs the Imola Race Track.

"I will have to speak to the representatives of the Williams team again following the conclusions of the experts' report," Maurizio Pasarini, the investigating magistrate heading the inquiry, told the Gazzetta dello Sport newspaper on Sunday.

"I don't know when it will be possible. April 30, the date of the San Marino Grand Prix, seems too far

champion Senna in a crash during the San Marino Grand Prix at Imola on May 1 last year. Austrian Roland Ratzenberger died in a 300 kph crash in final practice the previous day.

The inquiry follows the death of three-times world

12 years, said that the steering of Senna's Williams car failed as he approached the Tamburello curve on the seventh lap.

Williams' mechanics had modified the steering column after the driver had complained of being cramped in

the cockpit.

But Williams' lawyers have disputed the version of events given in the report commissioned by the prosecutors.

"Our data shows that the steering was working until the moment of impact," said lawyer Roberto Causo.



Mass 'civilian' graves in Grozny

GROZNY (Agencies) — Amid continued heavy fighting near Grozny, a newspaper on Sunday reported the discovery of two open mass graves in the secessionist capital containing the bodies of more than 100 Chechens.

The Observer of London said most of the dead appeared to be civilians, including some women and children, in the open trenches between Grozny's central graveyards and a main road. It said there were fresh bodies among the mostly decomposing corpses, and some were clearly victims of exploding shells while others looked relatively unscathed.

Survivors of the two-month Russian bombardment of the city reportedly visited the grisly site in search of missing relatives.

There were no immediate reports Sunday on the hostilities in the Grozny area, where fierce clashes occurred the day before as Russian forces tried to encircle the city.

The Russian government, which portrays the fighting in Grozny as being in the mop-up stage, said First Deputy Prime Minister Oleg Soskovets would visit Grozny and Russia's command base of Mozdok early in the week. The visit is connected with plans to rebuild war-tattered Chechnya and restore its economy, an unidentified government spokesman told Russian news agencies.

Russian army officials in Mozdok said an electrical short circuit triggered the explosion in the southern outskirts of Grozny on Saturday that killed at least 25 Russian servicemen.

Those killed in the explosion included 20 members of

the Omon, or special riot police squads.

The blast resulted from a short circuit in a remote-control device used to detonate mines, an unidentified Russian spokesman in Mozdok told the ITAR-TASS news agency.

On Saturday, a pall of black smoke clouded the skies southwest of Grozny after oil refinery installations were hit. Refugees said there had been battles in the area since Friday.

The main thrust of the Russian offensive was directed southwest, to the part of the wrecked capital still held by Chechen fighters.

Interfax reported heavy shelling of rebel positions in Grozny after its stubborn defenders, at one point, appeared to have driven Russian troops back from a key road.

Apartment buildings were in flames, it said, and civilians were either fleeing or hiding in cellars.

There were also reports of clashes in villages south and west of Grozny, areas still under Chechen control 11 weeks after Russian troops marched in to crush Chechnya's self-proclaimed independence.

Explosions could be heard every few minutes in Urum-Martan, 10 kilometres south of the Rostov-Baku highway, a vague frontline.

Several hundred people gathered in a field to hear an official of the pro-Russian Chechen opposition. He relayed Russian promises that Urum-Martan would be spared from bombings so long as it harboured no fighters.

(Continued on page 3)



Bangladeshi U.N. peacekeepers struggle to keep Somalis away from Mogadishu seaport (AFP photo)

Two weeklies ordered suspended

By Sa'eda Kilani
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The director of the Press and Publications Department (PPD), Mohammad Amin, Sunday decided to suspend the publication of two weeklies on the basis that their chief editors do not meet all the requirements set in the law.

Publishers of the two weeklies contested the decision and charged that it was part of a campaign launched against them.

The Monday newspapers, Hawadeth Al Sa'ah (events of the hour) and Al Bilad (the country), will not appear

today. But they "will be able to start reprinting as soon as their chief editors obtain the legal status or as soon as new chief editors who meet the legal requirements are appointed," according to Mr. Amin.

In a letter sent on Sunday to the two tabloids — a copy of which was also sent to Al Dustour publishing house where the two papers are regularly printed — Mr. Amin called on the two periodicals "to stop their publication until their status is corrected in accordance with the law."

But the publishers of the two weeklies said the newly-

appointed chief editors have been accepted as Jordan Press Association (JPA) members and have obtained their membership cards in August.

"But they were not sworn in," said Mr. Amin.

According to Mr. Amin, Yusuf Ghishan and Jamal Shawheen, who were appointed last month as chief editors of Al Bilad and Hawadeth Al Sa'ah respectively, replacing Nidal Mansour and Ruba Karasneh, applied last year for JPA membership and were accepted as members, but so far did not take the oath.

"They cannot be consi-

dered full members until they take the oath," said Suleiman Qudah, the JPA president. "The swearing-in ceremony will take place after the Eid," Mr. Qudah said.

The publisher of Al Bilad, Nayef Tourah, said swearing in was not a prerequisite according to the law. He said that Mr. Amin's decision was only a pretext to put pressure on the two tabloids because they publish news that are not in line with the government's policies.

"I would call it (the decision) a regression from democracy," Mr. Tourah said.

(Continued on page 7)

COLUMN

U.S. envoy to Kenya held briefly by police

MOGADISHU (Agencies) — Somali militias fought fiercely on Sunday outside the gates of the U.N.-controlled airport, where U.S. and Italian troops prepared for evacuation of U.N. peacekeeping forces.

A mortar bomb, apparently a stray round, slammed into the runway. Gunmen fired bursts of anti-aircraft gunfire at each other some bullets whizzed over the heads of dozens of U.S. and Italian forces inside the airfield, witnesses said.

It was not clear what the fighting was about, but tension mounted during Sunday as crowds of Somalis and gunmen gathered around the airfield gates as the countdown began for the withdrawal of U.N. forces.

Carloads of Somali militiamen could be seen speeding towards the scene of the fighting, which flared sporadically.

Foreign troops at the airport appeared not to have returned fire on the Somalis.

The U.N. Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM) is set to hand over command to U.S. Marine Lieutenant-General Tony Zinni on Tuesday, indicating that troops will probably come ashore in the early hours of the same day.

Earlier on Sunday, mortar blasts sent a plume of dust into the sky over the city's Bermuda district, a lawless maze of streets behind the sea port where the U.S. marines will land.

Rival clans called the Abgal and Murusade have been feuding for months in Bermuda, named after the Bermuda Triangle because many who venture in never come out.

The militaries have promised not to attack the U.S. and Italian troops coming ashore to pluck the rearguard of Pakistani and Bangladeshi troops, plus their military hardware, from Mogadishu's port and airport.

Several villagers in the Kabylie region have formed self-defence groups under the banner of the Rally for Culture and Democracy (RCD) after attacks by armed extremist groups.

A fortnight ago an armed fundamentalist gang attacked Aghrib, the home village of the RCD's secretary-general, Sadi Sadi, killing two teachers.

Mr. Sadi is also president of the Movement for the Republic (MPR), which has asked people in towns and workplaces to form self-defence groups to protect themselves against armed gangs.

Burma introduces dress code to counter 'hippie' culture

RANGOON (AFP) — Burmese authorities, concerned over the effect of "hippie" culture on youths, have issued a strict dress code for stage entertainers, state media reported.

The 10-point official dress code forbids male entertainers and singers from going on stage with mohair long hair or wearing earrings. Female entertainers were warned not to wear revealing dresses or hair styles unsuitable for a Burmese audience.

Religion Minister Myo Nyunt met with entertainers and restaurant and karaoke club owners and criticised them for not heeding official warnings against actions detrimental to Burmese culture, the reports in state-owned papers said. Myo Nyunt, who also heads the Rangoon military command, called entertainment spots "veritable breeding grounds of hippie culture" and accused the entertainers and club owners of engaging in unsavoury practices. "It has come to my attention that karaoke clubs don't only confine themselves to singing, but hold illegal competitions to send girls to another country," he said without elaborating. Myo Nyunt said public stage performances have been used as a pretext to create unrest, and warned that karaoke clubs may be closed permanently if the official warnings are not heeded. Those attending Friday's meeting gave Lieutenant General Myo Nyunt written pledges that they would strictly adhere to the new regulations, the state press reports said.

Dead Russian satellites leave trail of dangerous debris

NEW YORK (AFP) — Radioactive debris from dead nuclear-powered spy satellites could damage working satellites orbiting the Earth, NASA officials said in a newspaper report published Sunday. The nuclear debris could wreak havoc in a crowded orbit located 965 kilometres (600 miles) up of satellites for navigation, surveillance, weather tracking and observation of the Earth's natural resources, the officials were quoted by the New York Times as saying. "We're worried about it. It looks like it could be pretty bad," said Donald Kessler, senior scientist for the orbital debris studies at the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA).

More love-lorn Indians commit suicide — report

NEW DELHI (AFP) — Unrequited love is causing more Indians to commit suicide, the Press Trust of India (PTI) reported Sunday. "The incidence of suicide due to disappointment in love affairs rose by 79.3 per cent from 1,514 in 1989 to 2,714 in 1993," the news agency quoted a report by the National Crime Records Bureau as saying. Other causes of an increasing number of suicides were infection by dreadful diseases, bankruptcy and family quarrels, the bureau said.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Arafat bans paper after criticism

GAZA CITY (AFP) — Yasser Arafat has banned newspaper which backs his self-rule authority after it criticised Jordan, Palestinian officials said Sunday. Samih Samara, the editor-in-chief of the banned Al Rased daily, was unavailable for comment. Al Rased is affiliated to the Voice of Palestine, the Palestinian Authority's broadcasting service which also puts out two other daily political publications. These have not been banned.

New Shin Beth chief takes office

TEL AVIV (AFP) — The new head of Israel's internal intelligence agency, the Shin Beth, a specialist on Jewish extremism, took office on Sunday a government spokesman announced. The 44-year-old, known by the code-name "K", was promoted from deputy of the Shin Beth, which leads the undercover fight against subversion. The identity of his predecessor, "Y", who has retired, was due to be revealed Monday. The Shin Beth and its external counterpart Mossad, are controlled directly by Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin with a joint budget of \$350 million, according to finance ministry figures. K worked his way up through the ranks from a security agent in Israeli representative offices around the world to a district chief on the West Bank. When his appointment was made public a week ago, hardline settler leaders protested about the man who has played a major part in the crackdown on their activities. A settlers' attempt to block his appointment in the supreme court was thrown out last week.

Hassan II signals formation of new government

RABAT (AFP) — King Hassan II signalled the imminence of a new Moroccan government late Saturday when he discharged 11 ministers and six junior ministers from their posts. The officials are all "technocrats" who have been in office since June last year, a government statement said. At the end of last month the king reconfirmed Prime Minister Abdul Latif Filali in his position and told him to begin consultations with right-wing parties in preparation for a new cabinet. The right is being returned to power after the failure of an attempt to have an alternation with the left-leaning opposition, which refused to govern with powerful Interior Minister Driss Basri. The king refused to dump Mr. Basri and talks with the left broke down at the end of last year. Among those discharged Saturday were the ministers of justice, public works, transport, posts and telecommunications, housing, tourism, health, finance, education, employment and culture.

Aftershocks expected in Cyprus for another week

NICOSIA (AFP) — Aftershocks are likely to hit Cyprus for another week following the earthquake that killed two people late Thursday, a seismology official said. A tremor measuring 5.2 degrees on the Richter scale killed an elderly couple and injured six people near Paphos in the western part of the island where it also destroyed several dozen homes in some 20 mountain villages. "The behaviour and mechanism are similar to the 1953 quake, which measured 6.2 on the Richter scale and killed 64 people," Kyriakos Solomos told AFP. Aftershocks from that lasted for more than a month. The aftershocks from Thursday's quake are likely to last only a week because it was less strong, he said. In the period since Thursday, "4.0 and 3.5 degree aftershocks were registered, some on land and some offshore," he said. But most houses were strong enough to withstand jolts. There was "no damage to brick and concrete houses built over the last 30 years" in Thursday's quake, he said. Only old houses built loosely with stone collapsed.

Lebanese businessman murdered in Egypt

CAIRO (AP) — Colombia's honorary consul in Lebanon was murdered in Cairo last week after a disagreement with a business associate, police officials said Sunday. Edgar Madardi, a Lebanese, owned a successful factory in Egypt which manufactures anti-mosquito pellets. The officials said he was shot dead outside his factory by a businessman who blamed Madardi for his bankruptcy. His alleged murderer, who was not identified by name, was arrested. The police officials, who could not be further identified, said the murder was a criminal act and was not related to Madardi's post as honorary consul. Madardi's body was flown back to Beirut Saturday, and a memorial service was planned Monday.

Zhirinovsky wants anti-West coalition

BAGHDAD (Agencies) — Russian ultra-nationalist leader Vladimir Zhirinovsky said Sunday he wanted Iraqi President Saddam Hussein to join in forging a coalition to join with Arabs and Muslims to join with Orthodox Christians in a coalition and said he was ready to sign if President Saddam agreed to do so. The appeal also called for friendship between Russia and the Muslim World.

Mr. Zhirinovsky, heading a 50-person delegation which travelled by bus because of a ban on flights to Baghdad, accused the West of fomenting strife and wars between Muslims and Orthodox Russians, notably in Chechnya.

But he lashed out at Turkey, a secular Muslim state, for its "violation of human rights."

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Algerian villagers become vigilantes

ALGIERS (Agencies) — A group of villagers who organised themselves into a self-defence force killed the head of an Islamic extremist group in revenge for the murders of three of their people, newspapers reported Sunday.

Si Mohammad Mustapha was killed Friday during an exchange of fire between a group of eight extremists and a posse set up by more than 200 villagers in the Bounaamane forest in the Kabylie mountains in northern Algeria, they said.

Encouraged by Algerian security forces, the villagers from the Azeffoun area had organised a hunt for the armed band following the killing of a taxidermist from the village of Tighine and two men aged 60 and 70.

They opened fire as soon as they saw the gang, killing its leader and injuring other

members of the group, who fled. Stolen vehicles, provisions, and home-made bombs were found in the gang's store, according to the papers.

Several villagers in the Kabylie region have formed self-defence groups under the banner of the Rally for Culture and Democracy (RCD) after attacks by armed extremist groups.

A fortnight ago an armed fundamentalist gang attacked Aghrib, the home village of the RCD's secretary-general, Sadi Sadi, killing two teachers.

Mr. Sadi is also president of the Movement for the Republic (MPR), which has asked people in towns and workplaces to form self-defence groups to protect themselves against armed gangs.

They assert that the points included in the draft declaration "raise serious concerns to the business community."

"They do not deal with the issues which are supported by them, particularly education and training which they consider to be a fundamental element of an employment strategy," the comment says.

According to the ICC and IOE, any government approach to sound social development should include:

— A growth strategy based on stable and consistent macro-economic policy management, free of budgetary excesses and lax monetary policies. Government policies should also encourage international trade and investment in an atmosphere that promotes private investment and allows free enterprise; and the regulatory framework should be flexible so that employers as well as employees could adapt to economic change.

— Creating jobs and maintaining a compatible growth in job opportunities should be based on sustainable growth strategy rather than protecting employment which would lead to

inflationary policies and measures to support uncompetitive enterprises.